

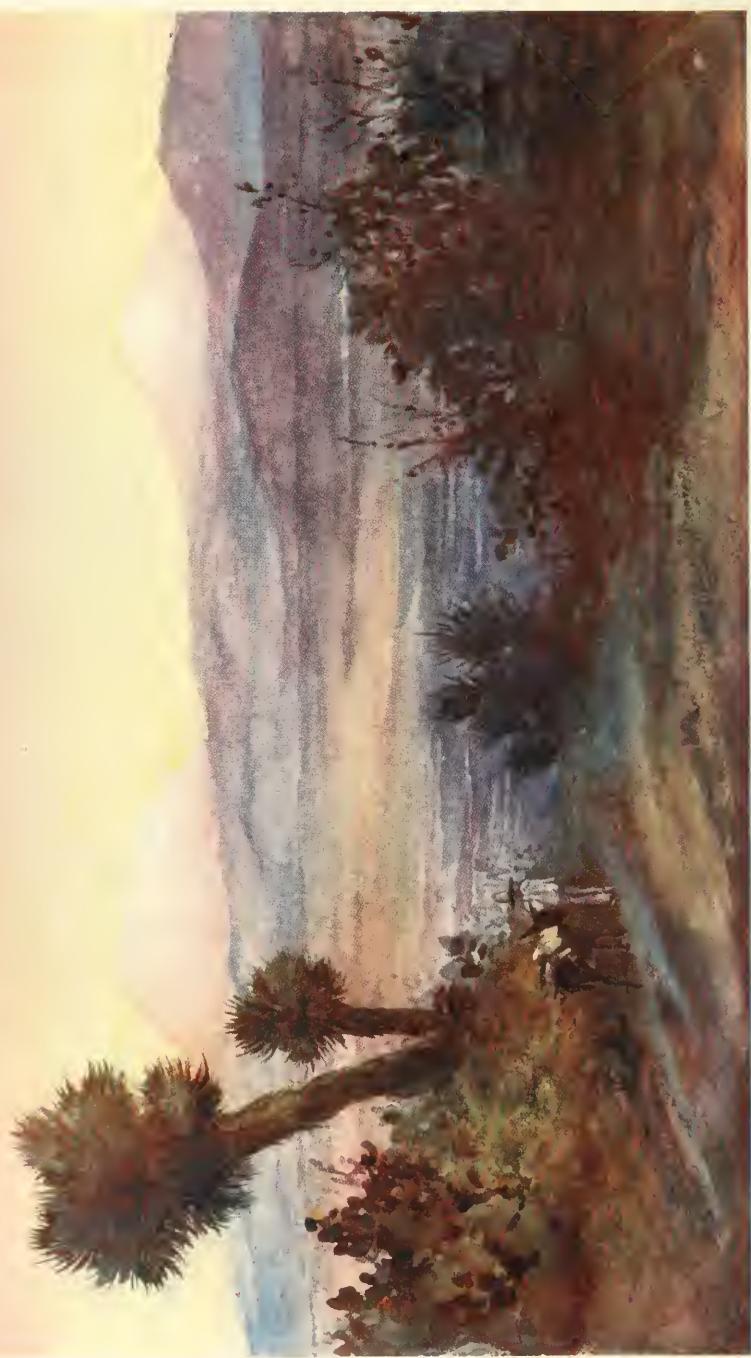




MEXICO AS I SAW IT.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THROUGH FINLAND IN CARTS. Third Edition.
A WINTER JAUNT TO NORWAY. Second Edition.
DANISH *VERSUS* ENGLISH BUTTER-MAKING.
THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY. *Out of
Print.*
WILTON, Q.C. ; OR, LIFE IN A HIGHLAND
SHOOTING BOX. Second Edition.
A GIRL'S RIDE IN ICELAND. Third Edition.
GEORGE HARLEY, F.R.S. ; OR, THE LIFE OF
A LONDON PHYSICIAN.



WATER-COLOUR SKETCH BY THE WRITER, SHOWING TWO EXTINCT VOLCANES
FROM MEXICO CITY.

MEXICO AS I SAW IT

BY

MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE
(*née* HARLEY)

AUTHOR OF

“THROUGH FINLAND IN CARTS”

“GEORGE HARLEY, F.R.S.”

ETC.

*ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS
BY THE AUTHOR.*

SECOND EDITION

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Piles showing all that remained of one of the four railway bridges washed away.



Steamer on dry land, Galveston.

MEXICO AS I SAW IT.

CHAPTER I.

ONE OF THE DISASTERS OF THE WORLD.

“WHY did I choose Mexico?” has continually been asked. Because, with all the world before me, that land seemed to offer a more historic past than almost any other country on God’s earth, and was there not a spice of danger and romance yet lurking among its hills and valleys?

There, men still carried arms; no one dare do otherwise, for, although seldom necessary, the mere fact of having them commands respect. Wild journeys on horseback through the mountains, to old Aztec ruins, moreover, sounded inviting.

In some respects Mexico, in this year of grace 1901, is highly civilised, but in others it remains utterly barbaric. Truly a land of paradox. It is most interesting, always picturesque, sometimes blood-curdling, and often sad.

That Mexico had a past I knew, that Mexico has a future I have only lately learned. Its future does not lie in wars and colonisation, but in its own mineral wealth and agricultural development, of which I shall have much to say later on.

Having written an account of “The Days of my Youth” for the series which appears in “M.A.P.,” I decided on another expedition before settling down to “middle age”

and quietly contemplating the approach of "senile decay," for if the days of my youth were indeed irretrievably past—as the request of "M.A.P.'s" Editor so plainly hinted—this would probably be my last jaunt before betaking myself to that bath-chair a reviewer once unkindly suggested would be my means of travel in the future.

That reviewer said he had "watched my literary career with interest. As a girl she 'rode through Iceland,' a little later she 'snow-shoed through Norway,' and then," he added: "She took to driving through 'Finland in carts,' therefore in more advanced years we may look for her travels in a bath-chair!"

He has been mistaken this time, however, for my out-of-the-way journeys through Mexico were generally undertaken astride a horse!

I wound up the four-hundred-day clock upon the library chimney-piece, bidding it tick on until my return, and tell forth the hours from hot summer to chilly autumn, from sombre winter to joyous spring. It kept faith, and on my return nearly eight months later was still ticking merrily. What months of wandering those were! I traversed some 25,000 miles by sea and land, slept in sixty-two different beds, and passed thirty-four nights in moving trains.

After winding the clock, taking a last look at home, and bidding farewell to family ties, I started forth on my travels for the first time *alone*.

It was a long journey; from Liverpool to Quebec, through Canada to Niagara, back to New York, Chicago, Washington and Philadelphia, peeping into lovely homes and happy families by the way; but still on I roamed.

New Orleans made me pause, but Mexico was my goal. As Galveston, however, is the last port before entering that fascinating country, this book begins there—recent events having made that town too historical to be passed by unvisited—and ends at the most southern harbour on the

Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which is destined to play an important part in the world's shipping commerce.

On Saturday, September 8th, 1900, one of the greatest storms this world has ever known broke over the Texan port of Galveston. More than eight thousand human beings met their death in a few hours, perishing cruelly by wind and wave.

On my way to Mexico I passed through Houston Junction, some fifty odd miles from Galveston, and as only ten weeks had elapsed since that frightful catastrophe, I turned aside to visit the ruins of a busy city.

"Are you not afraid of fever?" several friends asked nervously when they heard of my intention.

"No, if we were afraid of everything in life we should never accomplish anything," I answered, and went.

What a sight! What desolation!! What misery!!!

Each wave as it lapped that Galveston shore seemed to be sobbing a requiem mass for the dead.

Some of the survivors told me the morning of that Saturday dawned wet and windy—as the sun rose the storm increased; heavy rain fell, and surging clouds chased one another overhead. Still it was only a boisterous morning; so far nothing more. Storms and rough waves are not uncommon; consequently no great trouble was anticipated.

Galveston, be it understood, though an island some twenty-five miles in length, and varying from two to five miles in breadth, is really nothing more than a sand-bar, which only stands about five feet above the ordinary sea-level. To an outsider it seems a perfectly insane idea ever to have built a town on such a site, but this sand-bar affords the only harbour between New Orleans and Tampico in Mexico, a distance of nearly two thousand miles!

The town is all on the surface; there are no cellars in Galveston, and water is generally reached at a depth

of four feet. The island was connected with the mainland by four bridges, but on that awful night those bridges were swept away; every telegraph pole was blown down, all artificial light extinguished, till at last, shrouded in darkness and swept by storm, the town—completely cut off from communication with the outside world—had to face destruction alone.

To the South, Galveston is washed by the mighty waters of the Gulf of Mexico, which rising as one huge wave, in a single night destroyed thousands of human dwellings.

Along the shore of the bay were the poorer homes; there, for a distance of four miles and a depth of one (or seven streets), the entire area was swept clean.

About ten o'clock on that fatal morning the storm became terrible, the waters of the Gulf rose, and the inhabitants commenced to feel alarmed. Galveston had once before been partially submerged. This evidently was going to prove no ordinary storm, and anxiety filled every heart. The gale increased in intensity, the rain still fell, and hour by hour matters became more serious. Ocean steamers dragged at their anchors, smaller vessels were torn from their moorings, and blown on to the land! Steadily but furiously the waters ascended; the wind blew a hurricane. People found it difficult to stand upright. Chimneys, slates, tiles, and loose timber whirled about like paper, and still the storm grew more violent. Billows rushed through the streets; mighty waves swept all before them.

By three o'clock the waters of the Gulf of Mexico had spread over the city, and joined company with Galveston Bay, on the north side of the island.

Think of it! The whole town submerged. In some places the water rose thirty-three feet, and actually twenty feet within the city limits. It was like the Deluge!

Heart-rending were the tales I heard concerning that awful time! I saw a poor old woman tending four little children, the youngest being a baby only a few months old. She had lived near the beach with her two sons, one of whom was married. When the waters began to rise the latter took her and his four children to a house in the business part of the town—the only part which escaped destruction—and returned to fetch his wife and brother. *Neither he nor that wife nor brother was ever seen again!*

Another woman whom I met in what had been a street kept wailing, “Why, why was I saved?” That story was terrible. She and her husband, with two children on his shoulders, had breasted the waves till they rose as high as his arm-pits; nothing more is known of their struggle, except that the poor young wife was seen floating past a house when someone caught her by her hair and pulled her in through an open window. Her body was saved; but her reason lost. What became of the husband and children can only be imagined.

One poor youth, whose family was swept away, had both legs broken by falling timber; another bent old man searched for his wife during ten long weeks, but never found her. And so one might go on and on, relating the horrors wrought by that dreadful gale!

It is now said if people had only realised about mid-day that the waters would not subside as they did in 1875 and 1890, and at once left their homes and gone to the higher business streets, much less loss of life would have resulted; as it was, when they tried to escape in the afternoon and evening, by endeavouring to wade through four, five, six and seven feet of water, they perished in the attempt. Many were drowned; but even more were stunned and killed by falling buildings,

for a deadly shower of timber and tiles accompanied the gale.

The wind had attained a velocity of eighty-four miles an hour when the anemometer broke and the register ceased ; but a high official stated the later speed of the hurricane was computed at a hundred and twenty miles an hour ! Who or what could withstand such a pace ?

As daylight began to fade on that memorable Saturday, it was found that all the electric plant had been destroyed, that no lamp or candle would burn a single instant, and hopeless darkness was closing in upon the already ruined city. Weeks later I saw the remains of what had been the motor house : the large stone building was an utter wreck, no complete wall remained ; the dynamos were bent and twisted, the huge wheels used for working the machinery doubled up and lying a useless heap in the street !

All agree that the inhabitants of that ill-fated town lost heart when this awful darkness fell upon them, and seem to have anticipated the Judgment Day was at hand. Every hour made things more hopeless ; the storm increased each minute, the black pall overhead made every heart quail, every nerve relax. One man said to me :—

“ I kissed my wife and children, and we all prayed together that we might meet in Heaven.” Then he added, “ No death, no parting, no torture on the rack, could ever be more horrible to me than the memory of what we passed through that night.”

Only when one saw the devastation that resulted did it become possible even vaguely to imagine the agonies which must have been endured by those poor people. Every hour the heavens seemed to grow more densely black. Darkness and despair such as those men and women had never before even conceived, settled down upon them ; they heard the wind roar, and felt the waves still rising,

but could see nothing. Their houses swayed above and around them, a door or a window was blown in, bit by bit whole buildings fell. Many, numbed with cold and exhausted by hunger, relaxed their hold to whatever they might be clinging, and were drowned.

Yet the chief Rabbi told me he did not see a single tear ; emotion was paralyzed by fear.

“No one wept during those hours of storm,” he added, “but for days afterwards one continually beheld the meetings of people who, after having long searched in vain for their loved ones, eventually found them alive. Then, and not till then, tears of joy and relief over-powered them.”

Tears as often betoken joy as sorrow !

It would be quite impossible to describe the scenes of desolation I beheld in Galveston even seventy-two days after the storm. With the exception of the business quarter of the town—which had been repaired by importing some thousand men for the job—miles and miles of streets still lay ruined and desolated. Pavements were torn up, great stone flags lay piled up against some obstacle which had arrested them in their wild course, trees—once forming shady avenues—lay right across the side paths, telegraph poles were bent over, roofs which had been blown away entire were lying in gardens, amid huddled masses of bricks, wires rusted and tangled.

Among the débris were saucepans, baths, perambulators, and endless garments. Bits of clothing were torn from the people by the storm ; many of the wretched creatures were stripped almost naked on that cold cruel night. Children suffered fearfully. Horrors too terrible to pen happened on every side.

As one approached the beach, the aspect of affairs became more and more appalling. Here one saw a demolished tram-car, off its rails, which were all broken

and bent for a mile and more ; there, amongst the tumbled spars and splinters that had once been a wooden house, stood a cottage piano. Poor piano ! Think of the boys and girls who had spent their happy evenings with that now shattered instrument, soaked with rain, half its notes dumb for ever, its legs broken, a wreck which had been left out in all weathers during ten long weeks. There was something very pathetic about that piano, which had probably required all the savings of the family to purchase. There it was, shorn of its glory, its harmony gone, only able to emit a weird croak as we touched a note. Probably the fingers which once awoke its music were cremated in the heap of ashes close by.

In the first panic, when drowned or stunned corpses were washed away into the ocean, it was arranged all remaining bodies should be placed in barges and, after being weighted, buried in the depths of the sea. Terrible was the result, however, for a few days later the sea gave up its dead !

Then some scientifically wise person suggested cremation, and subsequently, wherever a dozen or more corpses were discovered, they were collected together, the shattered walls of houses, doors, floorings or what not, piled upon them, and the heaps ignited. This saved Galveston ; otherwise it is certain some terrible epidemic must have broken out, some plague finished the work of destruction begun by wind and water.

Passing on down the street, I saw rows of small houses standing on their heads ; they had been turned literally upside-down, and so they remained. On a side path lay the ruin of what had once been a sewing-machine. There it stood, rusty and useless, yet three months earlier some woman probably earned her livelihood by working those treadles. Where was that woman now ?

Mournful, most mournful were the endless tragedies that



Cremating the dead at Galveston.



House blown over by the storm.

had been enacted—girls looking for their lovers in the piles of dead, wives seeking their husbands. When I was there men were still unearthing corpses from under the ruins, the ruins of a city which once contained thirty-five thousand human beings, nearly a quarter of whom were killed in a few short hours.

Man could do nothing ; he was utterly powerless, he had not even time to run away. It was all too horrible, too terrible. As I wrote in the hotel which withstood the storm (though five feet of water had crossed the pavement and flooded its hall) it was November 19th, 1900, barely five weeks from Christmas, yet the heat was extraordinary, the thermometer standing at 90 degrees F. in the shade. The tropical rain of the previous night had barely run away even in that sandy soil, mosquitoes hovered around in millions, attracted by the terrible things which still lay concealed in every corner of Galveston, till they formed a veritable plague. Mosquito nets and curtains would not keep them out ; the air literally teemed with myriads of flies.

A plague of locusts in Morocco once amazed me ; but they were clean—this plague of flies frightened me, for they were multiplying on putrefaction. Thirty-seven bites on my face, I honestly own, alarmed me. Would they bring blood-poisoning in their wake, I wondered ; was I mad after all to visit Galveston, when that very day over one hundred corpses had been unearthed ? It is useless anticipating evil, however, so back I started to the beach.

A strange sight presented itself. We passed stone houses three floors high, roofless, or perhaps with only one story remaining, and felt for the rich folk as we beheld one wrecked dwelling after another ; but it was beside the shore that the most pathetic scenes presented themselves. Hundreds and hundreds of poorer homes had entirely gone ; nothing whatever remained

standing, the wreckage had been blown into a sort of sea wall, and the belongings of the poor had helped to preserve the residences of the rich. Here was the frame-work of what once had been a bedstead, now only a twisted mass of old iron, there an oven upside down, the leg of a chair, a bit of crockery, the pendulum of a clock, a pair of trousers, half a hat, a broken frying pan, a child's tin soldier covered with rust. Here lay the entire worldly goods of thousands of people, all collected into one huge mound, from beneath which, for days and nights, press gangs had been excavating dead bodies. In all, six thousand five hundred bodies were officially counted and disposed of, and it is estimated that fifteen hundred more were washed out to sea in the first instance, making a total of over eight thousand persons who met their death in the ruins of Galveston.

As each corpse was found, all clothes and valuables were gathered together, put in a little bundle, numbered, and officially kept with a label bearing the date of finding the body and an account of its disposal attached. This was a splendid scheme for identification; but it led to many sad results. People who had searched for days and weeks among the débris for their beloved ones, went to the office to examine these little bundles, and many a heart-breaking scene ensued as some lone survivor found the records of a dear one's death in that pathetic little collection. Thousands of articles have never been identified—indeed, only about half of those eight thousand dead was it possible to trace by name at all. Whole families were swept away, and no one survived able to tell who they had been.

After the storm subsided on Sunday afternoon, every able-bodied man was pressed into the service of burying the dead and clearing the town. Their shrift would have been short had they refused. Some of the niggers, who rifled the dead, were shot in the act, and that put a stop to

theft. Conscription was universal. Every man obeyed the command, and performed the work allotted to him.

For the survivors the arrangements were as follows :—

In rows upon the cleared part of the beach were ranged tents provided to protect the homeless. They were quite nice tents, large and airy, with double roofs ; but oh ! so sparsely furnished, for their wretched inhabitants had lost all they possessed. One encampment was for the utterly destitute, that is to say, families without a bread-winner ; there were six hundred and forty such families when I was there, and these destitute people were given three meals a day from a public kitchen, it was wonderful to see the organisation. Further down the beach were tents lent as houses to people able to provide for themselves. Water was laid on to the so-called "street" between the lines of tents at Beach Camp, and a sergeant from Texas seemed to keep excellent order, and see that nothing was thrown away likely to cause disease. Exemption from illness under such dreadful circumstances was the most remarkable result of the organisation.

Within forty-eight hours of the storm the stench in the town became almost unbearable, but so ably were matters coped with that no pestilence ensued, and, all things considered, little sickness. Judging by the millions of flies and mosquitoes that crawled everywhere, it seems a miracle that the survivors of the storm did not perish from some plague. Ozone, however, is a great purifier. Besides, all was under military rule and medical supervision. Carbolic and disinfectants ran down the gutters till nothing unpleasant remained except the scourge of flies.

A stranger could only marvel at the promptitude and method with which everything had been carried out, or rather was being carried out, for on the second day after my arrival at Galveston, the following statement appeared in the chief papers :—

MORE STORM VICTIMS FOUND.

A number of the unburied dead disposed of by cremation.

A SEARCH FOR MISSING RELATIVES.

A horrifying Spectacle Down the Island. Swamp Filled with one hundred Dead.
Attacked by Hogs.

So that one hundred dead bodies were actually found while I was in Galveston ; but the sight was too horrible, and I kept away. Seventy more were discovered during the following week, but in such a state of decomposition that they were quite unrecognisable, and had to be cremated at once. This cremation was, undoubtedly, the salvation of the survivors.

For weeks the outside world had been asking, "Is it wise to keep Galveston as a port after the storms of 1875, 1890 and 1900 ?" Certainly when walking round the low sand-bank of an island, a stranger would say decidedly "No !" Local opinion declares, however, that Galveston is of vital importance, not only to Texas, but to America. This is the only possible port between New Orleans and Tampico, and has an excellent deep-sea harbour. Hence its great business, its vast import and export trade ; but oh ! one has only to look at it under its present conditions to feel that no less desirable position for a home could be found upon earth !

The estimated loss to the survivors in the poor districts alone was 4,000,000 dollars.

Some people have doubted the necessity of restoring Galveston as a port, but they will hardly continue to doubt its importance when they learn that barely ten weeks after the disaster 29,000 bales of cotton were received in one day, which shows possibilities for the future !

People were given grants to rebuild their homes. It was not much—250 dollars, or £50, being the largest sum allowed to any one individual—still in the cases of the really poor and destitute that was everything, and enabled

many to start life afresh. A little house of two rooms and a kitchen was not to be despised. Help was also given in repairing or removing a house. Many homes were put on rollers and moved back bodily a quarter of a mile! Even brick buildings, strange as it may seem, were rolled considerable distances to their former sites.

One of the things which struck me as particularly curious was the want of method of the storm. The hurricane had blown in a circle, the wind whirling round and round, and the result was extraordinary. For instance, houses formerly in a line in the street had each been twisted in such a way that they sat in the next garden facing one another at an angle, or two fronts almost touching. It seems impossible; but it is true. Many things at Galveston seemed impossible, but they were able to prove themselves facts. Strangely enough, a well-built wooden house seemed to withstand the storm better than a brick one. It bent, sometimes it was blown bodily half a mile away, but the better wooden houses appeared to stick more together. Among brick buildings, the churches suffered by far the greatest damage. Hardly a single church remained standing, although in one street two darkies' churches had resisted the force of the storm, while four others were totally destroyed. The steeple of a Baptist chapel remained, while, singular to say, the church itself was a ruin.

This reminds me of a curious coincidence. Above the altar of St. Mary's Cathedral was a large crucifix; the storm tore down the wall behind it; but in some wonderful manner the enormous cross, when falling outwards, was caught on a timber, and hung there at an angle of 45 degrees, a weird illustration of the lowering of the cross!

It would be impossible to close this chapter without mentioning that great and good woman, Mary Barton, the Florence Nightingale of America, who hurried from Washington two or three days after the storm with an army of

doctors, nurses, and a corps for distributing food and clothing. America had great faith in her; her appeals were immediately responded to, and for eight weeks she organised the succour of the people.

Was it not Sainte Beuve who considered Experience a great book, the events of life its chapters? As one travels in distant lands and studies men and things, one realises more and more what a vast book Experience really is.

Poor Galveston! Nearly three thousand residences, according to official count, were totally destroyed; ninety-eight and a half per cent. of the remaining homes badly damaged, while not one single building escaped harm.

For eighteen hours that storm raged with mad fury, and then subsided almost as quickly as it arose. But the Great Gulf waves had encroached one thousand feet upon the land to stay, and they now wash hourly over what was formerly the site of the Beach Hotel, and the dwellings of many people. The shore front is changed; but is it for ever?

* * * * * *

A few days later I was at San Antonio, Texas, and when driving out to the delightful old Catholic Mission-Houses, my conversation with the darkie coachman turned on Galveston.

“I was there during the storm,” he said, in that soft musical voice peculiar to these people, who seem to talk the best English in America. “I had a week’s holiday, and went there to see some friends, and the very day before I ought to have left that storm came. Oh my!”

“It must have been fearful!” I exclaimed.

“There is no word for it. I just thought it was the end of the world—we all did. Oh my, it was bad! The only bit of luck I had was to get my leg smashed by some falling timber.”

“Why luck?” I asked in surprise.

"Well, you see, no man that could work was allowed out of the town, he had to help bury and tidy up, and oh my, there were some sights! But as I couldn't walk they let me go, and I felt as if I was getting out of Hell, I did!"

And remembering what I myself had seen in Galveston, I felt how truly the darkie was describing the scene in his own simple language.

CHAPTER II.

LIFE ON A MEXICAN RANCHE.

FOR hours and hours the train had been pounding along between huge Texan ranches—low-lying country covered with a sort of scrub intermingled with cactus and small trees, among which cattle or horses were grazing.

The journey seemed horribly uninteresting and dusty after leaving that delightful old town, San Antonio, with its history of war and plunder, and I was sitting lazily looking over some MSS. when an official in uniform appeared before me.

“Are you Mrs. Alec Tweedie?” he asked.

“I am,” I answered with an outward show of courage, though inwardly wondering “Who can he be? A detective? What does this portend? What crime am I supposed to have committed? Will he stop my journey?” All of which questions and a dozen more flashed through my brain during the moment that passed ere he said:

“I have come to help you at the frontier with your luggage.”

I sighed with relief, thanked him, and after his departure tried to go on with my work.

A few minutes only elapsed however, we had just passed a junction, ere another man stood before me, who likewise enquired :



Branded !



Six men to one calf !

"Are you Mrs. Alec Tweedie?"

I trembled again. What did it mean? Was my luggage overweight, or about to be confiscated, or what? Nevertheless I managed to reply calmly once more.

"I am."

"I come from the International Railway to bid you welcome to Mexico," was the astonishing explanation.

What a relief! He was a gentleman this time, and I asked him to sit down, and we chatted, but not for long, since in a few minutes—

"Are you Mrs. Alec Tweedie?" demanded a third man, handing me a telegram. It was really too funny, and this time I laughed outright, as did Mr. Carrington, to whom I had just related my previous experiences.

"I come from Mr. Cloete's ranche," explained the third envoy, "to look after you, and welcome you in his name," and Mr. Le Mare thereupon joined our party.

Only a short time went by, and we were chatting about my recent adventures, when a *fourth* man presented himself.

"Are you Mrs. Alec Tweedie?" he queried.

Convulsed with laughter, I could only nod assent.

"Mr. Barrett, of Sonora, asked me to meet you at the frontier, and see you safely to Sabinas," said Mr. Cowell, a mining engineer, looking surprised, as well he might, at my unexpected escorts.

It really was extraordinary. Four men had arrived from different directions, each on the same errand and each unknown to the other.

After all there are advantages in travelling alone. Every person offers to look after one, and certainly on those thousands of miles of journey I was scarcely ever allowed to feel solitary, and rarely sat down to a meal by myself during the many happy months I was on American soil.

How kind people are to strangers! How hospitable and thoughtful for their comfort.

Thus I crossed the Rio Grande at Eagle Pass, surrounded by friends, to be met on the frontier at Porfirio Diaz by charming ladies, Mrs. King, Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Carrington, all bringing lovely flowers, and a hearty welcome to Mexico. Under such delightful auspices I first trod on the soil of the Toltecs and Aztecs. Nearly all those people were strangers to me; yet when I left Mexico six months later, I felt I might number many of them among my friends.

It was quite dark, 10 p.m., when we arrived at Sabinas, and mounted into the queer Mexican carriage, drawn by a couple of steady-going mules, and were driven by a Spaniard in an enormous hat, to the ranche, or hacienda (h omitted in pronunciation) as it is called. It was not a long drive, or particularly delightful, though the hum of thousands of crickets added to its strangeness. The cry of those insects haunted me for months; but that night, in the dark and the oppressive stillness, it seemed absolutely weird.

"We four men who live at the ranche," said my host, as we drove through the night, "have all cleared out of the big house, so that you can have it to yourself. It is a two-storey building, with wide balconies, and I hope you will be comfortable."

"Who sleeps there?" I ventured to ask, the heart of even an "elderly scribe," failing somewhat at the prospect of spending a night alone in a big two-storey house in the wilds of Mexico—a land I had only entered that evening, where even my four bachelor hosts were strangers—if the Irishism may be excused—and where I knew every male to be fully armed!

"No one," was the reply, "the servants have their own huts, and our house is across the garden."

This was too much! I simply could not. It was close on midnight, there was not even a moon, and everything looked so black and strange that visions of dusky Mexican Indians with stiletto knives, pistols, long swords and umbrella-like hats—all of which I had noticed on the station platform—rose before me. Almost ashamed to own my fear—I was afraid, for the croaking of those millions of crickets well-nigh drowned the roar of the river below the house, and added uncanniness to night—I timidly remarked I should prefer someone sleeping within call. It was suggested that a man and his wife should be fetched, from a cottage a short distance away, and remain on the premises during the night.

After something to eat my kind hosts, each carrying a lantern, escorted me by the outside staircase to my room. Stairways are generally outside I found, and the rooms open directly on the verandahs. The balconies were about twenty feet wide, and creepers climbed up the supports.

“There is a lock on the door,” said someone in a tone of pride. I had taken for granted there was a lock, for I had not then learned there is rarely such a thing in Mexico.

It was a large room, so large that even though lighted with a couple of lamps the corners seemed far away. Two of the men remained chatting on the balcony, while the others proceeded to show me how to lock the door.

A twist, a squeak, an ominous crack, and lo, the key had broken in the lock!

Here was a pretty state of affairs! The men, looking terribly distressed, suggested they could get out of the window and jump to the floor below—the door being the only opening on to the balcony ; this idea was all very well, but what was to happen to me ?

Finally, a towel was bound round the stump of the key, some Herculean efforts ensued, and the thing turned in the lock. Yes, it moved, and in a moment the door stood wide.

What a relief for everyone. Mentally vowing not to attempt to lock it again, I said good-night, and the four men with their lanterns tramped down the wooden staircase and away into the darkness.

Here was a funny beginning. I, alone in a large square room without a lock on the door—outside a wide balcony and staircase. No one in the house but myself—and outside darkness, impenetrable darkness, with the roar of a river below, and the maddening hum of those crickets. I had not even seen the place, for it was dark when I arrived. Everyone and everything was strange to me, and—I may as well confess—I did feel more than a little nervous, though I hoped my hosts had not noticed the “white feather.” They were concerned enough about my comfort without that. I argued with myself, decided I was a fool, and went to bed.

Morpheus soon claimed me for his own—the result, doubtless, of a good constitution and a clear conscience—I forgot all about bandits and pistols, thin knives and large hats, and did not even dream of the broken looking-glass seen a couple of days previously at Houston, which had much impressed me.

It so happened that I arrived at Houston—the junction from Galveston for San Antonio—at nine o'clock one night, and as I was hungry and had a couple of hours to spare before the “sleeper” started, a friend advised it would be well to get some supper. Opposite to the station was an hotel.

“Can we have something to eat?” my friend ventured to ask.

“No, certainly not,” was the uncompromising reply.

Nothing is served in an ordinary American hotel except at meal times. In fact, it seems to be an unpardonable crime to wish to eat, excepting at the moment when everyone else does. However, we walked about the town,

and at last found one small restaurant open. It was not grand, but half-a-dozen men and a couple of women were there. A large mirror covered the wall from floor to ceiling near our table, and in it were two round holes and many splinters ! "What were they ?" we enquired.

"The result of a pistol-shot fired last night," replied the waiter, quite calmly. "The landlord regrets there has not been time to have the glass replaced."

Even to-day men go about armed in the Southern States of America and Mexico, and shooting bouts are not uncommon, as the prisons testify. To a Londoner all this seems a little alarming ! I slept peacefully, nevertheless, till suddenly awakened by a loud noise, a wild wind, cold and chill. I sat up in bed, shaking from head to foot.

I found the candle and struck a match which was instantly blown out. Great Heavens ! Where was I and what could have happened ? Why, oh why did I ever come to Mexico ? A second attempt was equally unsuccessful. I fervently wished I had never been born.

The wind had risen towards morning, and my door blown open by a more than usually boisterous blast. That was all. I got up, shut the door, dragged my big trunk against it, and was getting back into bed again when I heard an extraordinary howling growl. Were the horrors of that night never to end ? It was still pitch dark—just 4 a.m.—what new trouble did that strange noise forebode ?

I sat down and wished myself at home again. I was probably alone in an unknown house, for the carpenter and his wife whom my host had gone to fetch might have refused to leave their home in order to sleep on the floor beneath for my protection, and if I were, I did not even know where those four men slept "across the garden." The crickets still hummed unceasingly ; but above all else those weird howls continued.

Next morning I learned they were caused by wolves,

and before many days were over I became well acquainted with their music and appearance. My lock was repaired the next day, and after a survey of the country in general and my house in particular, I had no more silly frights. Still, on a ranche one must be prepared for anything, and life is distinctly interesting. It is busy simply because everyone has to do everything for himself. It is almost impossible to procure servants, and a friend, the daughter of a Lincolnshire parson, wrote the other day, saying "she had been without any domestic at all for more than a year, had cooked, washed, scrubbed, cleaned, in fact done everything for her three brothers, the greatest effort being to try to keep awake in the evenings to play accompaniments or sing to the boys!" "For," she added, "I'm often so dead-tired after cooking the supper on the top of the day's work, that if the boys didn't help me wash up, I really couldn't keep my eyes open to play a note."

The men are always out, they get up before daylight, breakfast, and away after the cattle they gallop. Perhaps they get home to dinner, more often not, in which latter case they take food with them. They usually return about sunset, and after a wash and brush-up settle down to supper and a "civilised hour" before retiring to bed about 7.30 or 8 o'clock. Posts are rare, once or twice a week, in really out-of-the-way places once or twice in three months; indeed, letters often have to be fetched a distance of many miles.

It is a healthy life, interesting to a man fond of sport, horses and animals; but intellectually it is stultifying. Any man or woman who manages to read and keep up with the times, only does so by a tremendous effort. Bodily fatigue robs one of the inclination to read, and difficulty of procuring literature means self-denial in other ways, in order that a purchase may be made at all.

A ranche is often two or three hundred miles in

circumference, hedged in by wire fencing, and as some haciendas are sixty and seventy miles across, it will be readily understood that there is not much society.

"Can you be ready to start soon after 5 a.m.?" asked one of my bachelor hosts.

"What, in the dark, with the stars?" I enquired anxiously.

"Yes, just before dawn, for we have to drive twelve miles, and that takes us over three hours in this rough country."

Of course I was ready, who would not have been ready for such an interesting spectacle as a cattle *round-up*? It must be owned the view from the balcony at 4 a.m. was not inspiring; true, the stars shone brightly in the deepest blue of heaven, but a thick mist lay over the river, and a heavy dew was falling. But just as there is no twilight in Mexico, so there is no dawn, and before breakfast was over the lamp and the flickering of the cheerful *mesquite* wood fire—which emits a delicious odour—were being extinguished by the streaks of a new-born day.

The *carruaje* (or coach) was at the door; the driver with his big Mexican hat, and couple of sturdy mules. Luncheon was stowed away behind, and my host and I mounted to seats beneath the canopy which such vehicles always have. I can only liken such a coach to an acrobat who apparently has no bones, and can turn and twist and wriggle any and every way. A Mexican coach has no apparent springs; its wheels are loose, everything is loose. The wheels on the near side, in fact, can run along the bed of a stream, while those on the off-side are high up on the bank, and although the vehicle looks and continually feels as though it were turning over, nothing happens. In spite of bangs and bumps that verily make one's heart stand still, the *carruaje* merrily continues its way over the roadless ranche, momentarily

threatening to eject its passengers, despite their holding on in very truth "for dear life."

The sagacity of the mule is surprising ; he knows the prickly pear will penetrate even his coarse coat and tough hide, and when one is driving along over the trackless prairie, if prickly pear comes in the way of a pair of mules they instantly part, each pulling away as far as his traces will allow. A moment later, perhaps, the funny mountain cart has to pass between a couple of cacti ; the mules see them in a moment, and will draw quite close together, their sides touching, in their endeavours to avoid the thorns. Every plant in Mexico seems to have a thorn, and some of them are three inches long.

A cattle "round-up" is a novel experience. Once a year every ranche has its stock-taking—truly stock-taking in its literal sense—and when, as in this instance, there were some ten thousand head of cattle, the entertainment lasts about a fortnight.

Twenty-five cowboys were employed to collect the cattle—not all at once, but from six to twelve hundred animals at a time. Men accustomed to the district are absolutely essential, as they alone know, from experience, where to find the herds, which will sometimes move fifteen miles in a single night, and when found how to work them to the "corral," or cattle pen.

The main corral is usually about the middle of the hacienda, and is composed of two or three large cattle pens, the palings of which are from seven to eight feet high, so that the animals cannot jump over them.

Before dawn the cow-boys start off to some water hole where they expect to find a herd ; there they may perhaps be lucky enough to come upon two or three hundred head at once, in which case they surround, while taking care not to frighten, them, for once alarmed a herd is very difficult to move. The animals are allowed to run in little groups

called "pie," given their heads, in fact, until they become accustomed to such an unusual sight as a number of mounted men. When the herd is trotting along pretty steadily, some of the cowboys will slip off to collect more cattle, and if they luckily come across a "bunch," drive it to the original herd. It is wonderful to see the dexterity of the stockmen, the way they gallop round the herd to bring in a straggler, whip one up, or, if necessary, lasso or rope another. The riders' enormous straw hats, coloured shirts and wonderfully tight brown trousers—made of leather to protect the legs in the low scrub—the Mexican saddles, the quaint stirrups of leather, various metals or wood, to keep the sun from burning the feet, and the yards of rope thrown over the saddle pommel, all combine to produce a marvellously picturesque whole.

On jogs the herd ; bulls, cows, and calves—even a baby calf two or three days old will travel beside its mother for four or five miles. The number is always increasing. Generally, if well handled, they go along quite nicely, at other times they give no end of trouble. For instance, I heard of a case in which thirty men got nine hundred cattle up to a corral gate, and after five hours they only succeeded in driving seven hundred inside, the remainder had just galloped away.

It is very exciting to join the finish of a drive, and this can only be done on horseback. Some animal is always breaking out of the line. A cowboy rides in front to lead the herd, two or three men are placed at intervals down each side of the group ; others form a line at the back to drive the beasts on, so that the cattle seem to be literally surrounded, yet one or two find a way of escape every few minutes, and often great chases ensue, which personally I found most thrilling. Occasionally a horse is hurt, when a bull turns and charges, but the men nearly always seem to escape. It is a wonderful sight to see hundreds of

cattle driven over the plains. Many of them are such splendid beasts, that when they have the courage to break through the line, one instinctively hopes they may escape. Some look so grand as they show fight, and as the sun glistens on their coats, the dust gives a sort of picturesque mysticism to those in the rear, and a round-up becomes most artistic as well as skilful.

When the herd reaches the gates of the corral, the cowboys slip behind, and forming into a horseshoe in the rear, gradually close in until they get them all into the stock-pens. Of course, many of them objected, and wonderful fights took place between the will of beast and the skill of man; but finally they were all driven inside the largest corral. The best way—indeed the only way—to drive them in properly, is to get the entire herd narrowed down into a long line; if they get spread out the difficulty is considerably increased. Cowboys seem able to do anything. The head man gives his orders like a general, and the herd is made to go almost in single file if he so ordains, and yet these animals are all wild, and only once a year, at the annual round-up, do they ever come near men at all. It is very interesting to watch the cowboys at work; their dexterity in the saddle, their power with the ropes, and their wonderful quickness, can only be acquired by long experience. Buffalo Bill's cowboy performances which so fascinated London may be seen any day on the open prairie. At the round-up, by four o'clock in the afternoon, I saw thirteen hundred cattle penned; which completed the work for that day.

Next morning at the first streak of dawn, the men, who were living in camp—some in tents, others sleeping in the open between mackintosh sheets, or rolled in a blanket—were out again, dividing the cattle for branding. This branding is a great feature of the yearly round-up, as all animals born since the last count have to be

"branded for life," on this occasion. It sometimes happens that a particularly wily beast may escape for years, and I chanced to see a seven-year-old bull caught for the first time ; he was a magnificent creature. He had long eluded capture, but the day of reckoning came, and his fight for independence was worth travelling to Mexico to see. He deserved to escape ; nevertheless he was conquered—and branded.

A magnificent bull truly ! First one of the boys managed to lasso him by the horns. He shook his head, charged, and went full tilt after his adversary, who only managed to scramble over the wooden railings in time to miss those tremendous horns as they rattled into the planks. Another cowboy, by this time, had caught him by one leg ; but his strength was splendid, and he plunged and snapped the rope. Times without number those men fearlessly approached that wild beast, lassoed him, and once they actually managed to throw him. Caught by the head and both fore and hind legs as he was, he got up, snapped all three ropes, shook himself free, and galloped off more wild than ever. He bore himself like a hero, but eventually was vanquished.

Branding is managed thus :—

A gate leading from the large into a smaller pen is opened, and the calves are all driven through. A man sits on high, and as the animals pass along a narrow walled lane built for the purpose of causing them to move slowly, he calls out to the stock-keeper—who marks them down accordingly—their age and sex from the appearance of their heads. At the end of the lane is a revolving gate, and so cleverly does another man work it that he makes all the calves go into one pen, and the remaining stock into another.

The poor baby calves, naturally feeling sad at being separated from their mothers, a regular concert ensues.

When all are within the branding pen, the chief excitement of the day—requiring the greatest skill—begins. Each calf has to be caught for branding, and each animal distinctly objects to the operation. Two or three cowboys in the corral are mounted, the rest are on foot, and every man has his ten yards of rope, for lassoing the creatures, hanging in front of his saddle. The ranchero gallops off to the bunch, throws his rope over the calf's head—and a calf of a year old is a big fellow, especially if he be a bull—and drags him kicking and plunging back to the place where the branders are ready for him. Then another man on foot, with the most marvellous dexterity, will lasso him by the hind-legs, and perhaps a third catches him by the same means in front, when the cowboys finally throw him over. Some of the animals show wonderful pluck, fight, caper and dance around in grand style. I loved the roping; it was simply splendid to see the certainty with which it was done. The lasso had a loop at one end, and was thrown in such a way that the loop should fall just in front of the calf's legs. As he moved, he jumped into the noose, and like a flash of lightning the thrower pulled it tight. Poor calf! he struggled bravely; but could not get away.

In a hole in the earth, is a fire with hot irons, made in the shape of a long poker, bearing the owner's initial or sign at the far end, like an open seal. Immediately the calf is thrown, one of the branders takes his iron, and holding it against the animal's side, burns the hair down to the flesh, so that if he ever wanders off the ranche his ownership can be proved. A snip in the ear also adds to the identity. These markings are all registered at the Municipal Offices, so that there is little difficulty in establishing ownership of ranche animals, whether horses or cattle. The former have a much smaller and neater brand, and their ears are not cut. If the beast be young its brand grows with it, and a mark six inches long when

made on a calf a few weeks old, will be fifteen inches at least on a full-grown animal. When the operation is over, up jump the branded calves, and with a shake and a snort away they run, but not before the hair of the tail has been cut straight, so that in a moment a cowboy can see which beast is no longer wanted, and can turn his attention to animals whose tails have not been snipped.

It takes an entire day to brand three or four hundred calves ; but when the business is over they are allowed to go back to their mothers, lowing for them on the other side of the paling. They are all left together for an hour or more, to give them an opportunity of finding their relations. When one sees over a thousand animals in a pen, it seems perfectly amazing that a calf should know its own parent ; but the mother, at any rate, immediately recognises her own offspring.

If possible, the animals are let out that night, so that they may get to food and water, and oh, what a noise, what dust, as helter skelter they rush through the gates away to their native heaths, never to come near man again for a whole year, unless when sick or wanted for slaughter.

At Mr. Merrill's hacienda, Soledad (meaning solitude), I saw a round-up for the butcher. It took place out on the open prairie. Six or seven hundred animals were collected together ; the butcher rode in amongst them, and one by one selected the hundred he wanted. Each beast was *cut out* in turn, that is to say, separated from the herd. The fattened steers went to one side, and were finally driven in single file for counting, and to see that they were all up to the required weight, and were then driven off to the train. Butchers buy in quantities like this, and choose stock on the prairie.

Now for a little practical information about a Mexican hacienda. It is roughly reckoned that fifteen acres of land will support one animal ; thus, ten thousand head of

cattle will require one hundred and fifty thousand acres of land ; but everything depends on the water supply. Without natural water-courses it is often necessary to bore and pump water by means of a small windmill into a tank or earth-deposit ; of course, the windmill when once fixed works alone. By means of these artificial supplies, the cattle are usually able to obtain water every four or five miles, which is quite sufficient distance. In spite of all precautions, however, drought is not unknown. That proves an awful calamity, and generally spells *ruin* to many. In the event of a drought the animals will wander in a body to the river, when for miles from its bed they eat up all the grass. Gradually, they are driven so far back for food that, the grass and the water being too distant for them to travel daily from the one to the other, the poor creatures simply lie down and die by the way. Thousands perish in this manner, and the only thing to do to avert pestilence is to collect the carcases together and burn them. The wolves and vultures make an end of those not disposed of in this manner.

By the way, Mexican wolves often kill little calves, and the sight of a calf without a tail means that though Mr. Wolf had the tail, its owner was clever enough to save its body. Lynxes abound ; but seldom molest the calves—chickens are more in their line, while the panther will not only kill colts, but also devour young horses.

Native cattle cost about fifteen dollars (Mex.), or thirty shillings apiece ; they are, however, poor and unsatisfactory. "Improved cattle"—meaning those crossed with other breeds, notably Herefords and Durhams—are more profitable ; they fetch from twenty-eight to thirty dollars a head, or from £2 10s. to £3.

It is always well to be as practical as possible, and since some of my readers may like to have a clearer idea of the value of stock on a northern ranche in Mexico, and the

number of beasts to the acreage, the following table, is from a stock book after the yearly "round-up."

On a cattle hacienda of 225,000 acres, or about 340 square miles, the amount of stock was somewhat as follows:—

Number.	Class.	Value per Head.	Total.
3,292	Cows ...	\$15	\$49,380
1,095	Calves ...	7	7,665
443	Heifers, 1 year	10	4,430
835	," 2 years	12	10,020
1,050	Steers, 1 year	16.50	17,325
1,638	," 2 years	19	31,122
1,438	," 3 "	26.50	37,948
1,119	," 4 "	30	33,570
45	21 Bulls, 1 year	15	315
	24 Bulls (Herefords)	135	3,240
68	Bulls, 2 years	20	1,360
183	Bulls, 3 "	30	5,490
<hr/> 11,200			\$201,865
5,978	Auxiliary Stock (see below)	...	7,660
<hr/> 17,178			\$209,525

AUXILIARY STOCK.

Number	Class.	Value per Head.	Total.
5,341	Goats, 4 years	\$0.50	\$2,670.50
3	Jacks, 4 "	30	90
1	," 3 "	20	20
7	," 1 year	10	70
14	Colts ...	7	98
31	Jennies ...	5	155
6	," 2 years	4	24
11	," 1 year	3	33
3	Colts	1.50	4.50
13	Mules ...	40	520
8	," 3 years	30	240
9	," 2 "	20	180
7	," 1 year	15	105
7	Colts	10	70
16	Colts, Horse, 3 years	8	128
26	," " 2 "	5	130
24	," " 1 year	4	96
37	Odd	2	74
22	Colts, Filly, 3 years	3	66
33	," " 2 "	2	66
31	," " 1 year	2	62
44	Odd	1	44
4	Stallions ...	20	80
121	Mares ...	6	726
159	Saddle Horses ...	12	1,908
<hr/> 5,978			\$7,660.00

The value of the live stock exported from Mexico in 1899 was greater than in either of the two previous

years, and amounted to £634,710 in 1899, as against £436,719 in 1897 and £500,479 in 1898.

The night of my first cattle round-up proved most exciting. A cow had been killed in the rush in the corral, and the stockmen dragged the carcase outside, and left it at some little distance from the pen. About ten o'clock at night when all was dark and still—the stillness of a Mexican night is wonderful, and the clearness of the dark blue heavens soul-thrilling—a pack of prairie wolves, smelling the feast from afar, made their way towards it. Even two wolves will make a tremendous noise as they reply in rapid succession each to the other's howls, and half-a-dozen such prowlers can furnish a fine concert, albeit in a somewhat dreary key.

The cattle, which had not been turned out, were presumably asleep when Mr. and Mrs. Wolf and family arrived on the scene. One of the herd must have noticed the noise, or possibly the wolves got into the pen and tried to secure a baby calf; whatever the cause, all the cattle became alarmed, and the thirteen hundred of them stampeded. With a roar of fright they rose as one beast. In spite of massive palings seven or eight feet high, built of thick planks, the animals in front made a rush, those behind pushed after them, and in a twinkling twenty-three feet of paling were thrown down, and hundreds of free animals flying madly over the prairie. Like wild things they fled, bellowing with fear. A stampede is something appalling, yet only one animal was killed in the rush—another cow, which we found lying a quarter of a mile away next day, almost devoured by seventeen prairie wolves, who were so busily employed upon the carcase they did not even notice our approach until we were quite near them. What the wolves do not eat the vultures soon finish; they hover around, ready to swoop down at any moment.

On a ranche one may sometimes find a skeleton of a

horse or cow torn in pieces, for the wolves in their wild hurry to gnaw the flesh from the bones frequently sever the joints asunder.

A stampede nearly always occurs at night, and generally in a corral. In the open some of the cattle remain awake for protection, "on guard," so to speak; the only thing that will then cause a stampede is the appearance of a man on foot. Such an unusual apparition frightens them, and at the sight off they go. A man on foot, however, is rarely about at any time, and almost never at night, so such rushes seldom occur. In a pen cattle feel they are shut in, and therefore settle down to sleep contentedly. If one becomes scared, they all seem to rise simultaneously, like the bang of a cannon every hoof touches the earth, and away they go at lightning speed. Big steer cattle will run seven or eight miles when really frightened, and lose more flesh in one night than they can make up in a month, even on good pasture.

A man once told me he had known a herd so wild that they rushed right over the edge of a bluff, never even seeing it in their alarm; the result being that fifty-three mangled carcasses were found at the bottom of the ravine! As may be gathered, a stampede is a thing to be avoided at all costs. Once the cattle are started the only way to lessen the danger is to set them "milling," viz., running round and round in a circle, and the cowboys are so experienced they can often succeed in doing this, even with a big herd. That night the boys were in their saddles in a twinkling, and caught up the cattle before the herd had run two miles. It was wonderful. They surrounded the animals, and although some naturally escaped, the majority were set "milling," and finally brought back to the pens.

In these stampedes the long horns often do much harm, and now it is quite usual to cut the horns of cattle, especially bulls, at two years old. This is also an

advantage when travelling by rail, for most cattle are borne to their doom in freight vans, and much bloodshed is consequently saved by blunted horns.

“What kind of cattle are most dangerous to meet alone?” I once enquired.

“A single cow,” was the reply. “She is vicious and vindictive, and may rush straight at you. A bull on the other hand is not so quarrelsome, and if he should charge he closes his eyes at the moment of attack, so you can dodge him as he makes his rush. A matador can fight a bull; but I do not think any matador would venture to fight a frenzied cow! Strangely enough, herds in the open are never dangerous; but a few cattle scattered about will sometimes go for a man, more particularly if he happens to be unmounted.”

A poor little calf was born in the corral on the night of the stampede, and the next morning when we went out, we found the wee thing looking very sad and dejected, bellowing for its mother. I patted it and it sucked my fingers, and stuck its nose against me, evidently attracted by the warmth. No one seemed to think anything of the mite’s being left alone; that is the fashion in ranche-land. A small calf is told by its fond mamma to remain where she leaves it, and off she goes, perhaps, for an entire day, to search for food. Towards evening, however far she has wandered, she returns to her baby, stays all the night with it, and next morning goes off and leaves it again. As the calf grows bigger it learns to follow its mother, and by the time it is a week or a fortnight old, runs by her side.

Cattle have curious ways of their own; for instance, an ordinary herd will *string in* to water about nine or ten o’clock every morning. One of the old cows will start off, generally to the same pool, and the others invariably follow in single file. They walk right into the water and drink, then go and lie down on the bank to chew the cud.

The writer on a corral.



The loneliness of the prairie : a Caporal.



They stay near water until about four o'clock in the afternoon in the summer, during which time they will drink, perhaps, three or four times. Towards the cool of the evening they begin to wander away, going in single file along the paths they have made. Many animals have their own particular feeding-ground, and travel, perhaps, three or four miles back to it, not stopping to eat anything by the way. They feed until it is quite dark, often indeed when it is dark, and then lie down and go to sleep. By daylight they are busily eating again, and when satisfied trail off to the water.

In summer, cattle go every day to water; but in the cooler weather they do not drink for two or three days at a time; especially if they get lots of prickly pear, a form of cactus which is the salvation of prairie cattle in times of drought; it is very juicy, being 87 per cent. water. The animals eat the cactus, including all the prickles and thorns—they are real prickles and thorns—and sometimes their mouths get so full of them that when they are killed it seems wonderful they could have managed to exist under the circumstances, for the back of the tongue looks like a cushion stuck full of pins.

To encourage the cattle to eat sufficient prickly pear to live on in times of drought, the ranchmen cut it off the stem, make a fire, and burn off the worst of the prickles, which they do by holding the leaves over the flames for a moment; the wildest animals will follow anyone about in the tamest manner to obtain this specially prepared delicacy, which often goes far to save their lives. A train of Mexican carriers, who travel about with perhaps forty carts of goods and half-a-dozen oxen yoked to each cart, feed their animals entirely on these pears. The species abounds, and good jelly is made from the fruit. The flower, too, is pretty.

The real wild cattle, which still exist in parts of Mexico,

are weedy and small, with enormous horns ; they live on the prickly pear and grass, never seek water like the ranche cattle, and never drink at all except when it rains and they find a puddle. They are fast dying out, indeed ranche owners shoot them whenever they get a chance. Sometimes the cowboys rope, and neck or yoke a wild beast with a gentle one, hoping to tame the monarch of the hills, but as a rule this does not answer ; the wild animal generally dying of a broken heart. He simply lies down, sulks, and kicks. It is found better to kill them at once, for otherwise they cause a great deal of trouble.

These wild beasts unfortunately entice the tamer animals away into the hills.

Certain ranches are famous for the fighting qualities of their bulls, and to see these bulls caught for the bull-ring is thrilling. A herd is collected into a corral. The finest bulls of the appointed age are marked by the *Caporal* (head ranche-man), and *cut out* from the herd. The Caporal rides into the herd, lassoes his bull, and gradually works him to the gate, where he is driven into another pen. Several bulls will thus be collected together. But it is not easy work, and the play of some of them is, to the onlooker, really alarming. They rush at the horses and try to gore them ; they tear after the men and endeavour to toss them, and both men and horses are in peril of their lives. Indeed, the more fight the bull shows, the more will he be prized in the ring. Once in the pen, which for this purpose is adjoining the railway line, one of them is driven along a passage way which gradually slants upwards, at the end of which is the box which is to carry him to destruction. He is not put into an ordinary freight van, like beef cattle ; but into a box just big enough to hold him, and where he is in the dark. Thus in solitary grandeur each beast goes in his own little chamber to his doom.

What afterwards happens to him will be described in another chapter.

There are two exciting performances at a ranche. One is "tailing the bull," the other is riding him. Tailing is a funny entertainment, but a little cruel. A ranchero at full gallop rushes after a bull; his horse comes up to it. Instead of attempting to lasso the beast, the cowboy waits till he is up to him, leans down, catches him by the tail, swings the tail over the lasso pommel in front of his Mexican saddle, and throws the bull. A bull is a heavy beast, and the nerve, pluck, dexterity and strength necessary for this enterprise are enormous, both on the part of the cowboy and his horse.

To ride a bull is equally exciting. First he must be lassoed and thrown. A rope is sometimes put round his body for the rider to hold on to, and the cowboy seats himself astride the great carcase as it lies on the ground. The lassoes are let loose; up jumps the bull. He has never had anything on his back before. He kicks and plunges, bucks and jumps, and then off he goes at full gallop. The stockman is invariably thrown in the end, but meantime the pair have good sport. I have seen more courage on the prairie than in the bull-ring!

CHAPTER III.

HORSE ROUND-UP.

WE all know horses in cabs and carriages ; some of us have hunted or seen them racing ; but a horse never looks so splendid, so bold and fearless as in his semi-wild state on the prairie.

Horses are easier to deal with than cattle ; the reason for which is soon explained. The horse is a more delicate creature ; he needs constant care ; consequently the cowboys are often after the *bunches* of horses, attending to one that has gone lame, to another that is sick, and so on. Horses do not go about in huge herds like cattle ; in well-managed ranches they are taught to run in bunches of colour.

“ What is a bunch ? ” I enquired when I first heard that expression.

“ A bunch or *manada* is composed of twenty-five mares and one horse, or a jack donkey when mules are required,” was the reply ; “ each manada is well selected as to colour—bay, brown, white, chestnut, roan, or black—so that the breeding may be uniform.”

It was a wonderful sight to see a number of these bunches coming in. About twenty men went out before day-break, and it was nine hours before they had collected sixteen manadas or bunches, and brought them up to the corral. This amounted to four hundred and sixteen horses, and as there are usually in addition seventy per cent of foals, the grand total was about seven hundred !



Horses on the prairie.



Mules on the prairie.

Seven hundred almost wild horses galloping over the prairie and yet when Cortés landed four hundred years ago a horse or an ox was unknown !

Like a small cloud they first appeared on the horizon ; so small, indeed, that my untrained eye did not see anything for nearly an hour after it was first sighted. Then a soft grey mist appeared to be rising from the ground ; thicker and thicker it grew until it looked like smoke or spray ascending forty or fifty feet above the prairie. No one can understand the dust of a ranche who has not seen it, neither can any person realise the strange effect of the sound of hundreds of galloping feet, like a cavalry charge, while the animals' heads gradually emerge from clouds of flying sand. So great was the dust that it was almost impossible to realise the number ; seven hundred horses, and yet only about a dozen of the foremost to be seen !

I had seated myself on the top of one of the great corral gates, that top piece which binds the whole structure together, and there, Kodak in hand, waited the advent of that army thundering over the plain. On it came—on blew that bank of sand, and then one by one the heads emerged. As I saw them, and prepared to take snap-shots, they saw me, and prepared to run away ! They had probably never beheld a woman before, and certainly not one perched up on a bar twenty feet above the ground ! They were startled and inclined to fly ; then one, more plucky than the rest, seeing an open space beyond the gateway, galloped beneath me, and all the others quickly followed suit. They looked simply splendid, their nostrils dilated, their long tails and flowing manes, with a certain wild beauty about them all. The finely built thoroughbreds, the dear little foals looked so free and independent !

The common Mexican horse is a weedy specimen, and of little or no value. Stock horses only cost about six dollars (Mex.=12/-) apiece, but "improved breeds" are

worth twenty dollars "all through." Of course this means buying in numbers. One hundred or a hundred and twenty dollars are readily given for a three-year-old colt from Mr. Brodrick Cloete's ranche at Sabinas, and sixty-five to seventy-five dollars for a two-year-old mule, while from three hundred and fifty to four hundred dollars are paid for a pair of trained mules of good size. Mr. Cloete has made a speciality of horse-breeding; he has imported pedigree stock, including a pair of American trotters, a couple of Cleveland bays, etc. The pedigree horses are all branded on the cheek, and not on the flank like cattle. Fine breeds of horses that have been imported stand the climate well; but among English bulls the death-rate has proved to be about ninety per cent!

The native horse is generally too small. The idea of getting larger animals is to increase the weight. The most saleable horse in Mexico is from 15 to 15½ hands high, and such stature can only be found in *improved* stock. During cold weather—in Northern Mexico (about four months)—thoroughbred horses and jacks are stabled and fed; native horses of course do not require this care, nor even the cross-breeds.

It seems marvellous that bunches of colour do not get mixed up on a ranche some twenty miles across; but the animals are taught to run together. At first they are sorted carefully as to build and colour, till twenty-six are settled on; a boy is sent for days to ride out with the bunch, and his duty is always to keep them together. Continually riding round and round them, he sends each straggler back to the main body, till gradually they become so friendly that nothing will separate the happy little family; so much so, indeed, that if two or three bunches chance to come together, they sort themselves again and oft go the twenty-five mares with their horse.

Boys begin this sort of work almost as babies on a

ranche. One sees a toddling lad of five lassoing the chickens and pigs outside—or even inside—his father's little hut, and so accustomed do they become to riding that they are nearly all bow-legged! This is not surprising when one learns a man spends ten hours out of twelve on the saddle. They walk badly; but they ride magnificently.

The head stock-man, or Caporal, is nearly always an Indian. One man I saw was a very fine specimen; he inherited the marvellous traits of his tribe—instinctively knew where to find water, could prophesy the weather accurately for days ahead, could predict drought, and of course was a splendid rider, thinking nothing of seventy or eighty miles a day on a dozen different mounts. He was very black and had a most villainous face. He looked like a murderer, and rumour whispered he had verified his looks. There were a couple of dozen boys under him; oh dear, what a life he must have led them! But he was invaluable as regards the stock; to his animals he was kind and thoughtful—verily a strange specimen of humanity.

Another Caporal, of whom I saw a good deal, was quite a character. He came from Texas, and had been a cowboy for thirty-six years, having maintained himself entirely since the age of eight. He did not know who his father and mother had been.

“I don't think I ever had any,” he laughingly said. He could neither read nor write, yet he managed to keep the most accurate accounts in his head, and could tell exactly what stock there had been at each round-up for years past, or the prices the beasts fetched at any particular time. He went to bed when the sun went down, and got up when it rose. He knew almost every animal on his ranche, and there were at least fifteen thousand; if he did not know them all he knew about most of them, and had theories—probably correct ones—about the rest. He was most polite; but treated even a lady quite as a

"pal" and equal ; in fact he was one of Nature's gentlemen. A man with the strongest sense of honour and justice, determined, self-reliant, plucky, he was yet gentle as a child with a sick animal.

Cowboys are studies ; they seem to have been born in the saddle, to be capable of enduring the greatest fatigue without ever feeling tired. For instance, one day after starting before daylight to round-up cattle, they did not get back to the corral, where we were waiting for them, until two o'clock ; thus they had been ten hours in the saddle, during which time they had been incessantly on the gallop. They unsaddled their horses, and settled down to their dinner. They closed round the camp fire, but not to sit like other folk, oh dear no ! Each man knelt on one knee while he sat on the heel of his other foot, and ate his dinner with his plate—on the ground ! It seemed to me a most uncomfortable and unrestful proceeding, but apparently they liked it.

We had not intended to stay out to lunch, and were therefore unprovided with the usual basket.

"Very sorry, Mrs. Tweedie," said my host ; "but it is two o'clock and either you must join the cowboys' fare, or wait three hours till we ride home again."

"Anything will do for me," I replied. "A glass of milk and a piece of bread and butter will suit splendidly."

"You have asked for three things I cannot supply," said my host, looking woebegone. "Milk we never have ; wild cows give very little, and they have to be lassoed to be milked and then hold the milk back, so it is not worth the trouble. Butter ditto, and bread is never baked at these camps. They make a hard biscuit which lasts for days. So you see the three most ordinary forms of food cowboys have to do without."

Here was a revelation ! But it taught me not to ask for such luxuries in future.



A cowboy luncheon party.



“Bunches” of horses on the prairie.

I was given a place at this strange repast, and a tin pail turned upside down served as a seat; a plank of wood supported by an old box and another bucket made an excellent table. I never enjoyed anything more in my life than that cowboys' dinner-party!

We had hot meat served in a tin can; the beef was "jerked" or sun-dried. When an animal is killed, the best joints are reserved for immediate use, if the weather be cool enough for it to keep at all; but the loin, round, neck, etc., are all jerked. That is to say, they are cut into thin slices, from a quarter of an inch to an inch thick, thoroughly salted, and then hung out in the sun to dry. In from thirty-six to forty-eight hours they are sufficiently dried, and will keep for almost any time. This is indeed much the same process as that of the biltong of South Africa; in summer-time all the meat has to be sun-dried at once; but in winter the necessity is not so great.

Our dish of jerked beef had been cut into a sort of mince, flavoured with onions and fried, and it was really excellent for anyone who did not mind onions. We had a kind of ship's biscuit made over the camp fire; large round cakes, eighteen inches in diameter, and about two inches thick; besides which we were given tea and sugar.

Everyone seemed to eat heartily, but in twenty minutes the meal was finished, and putting cigarettes in their mouths, the cowboys went off to the corral to brand their horses. Poor little colts, their legs were so fine it seemed more sad to see them thrown for branding than the calves. They looked such pretty fragile things, one felt really sorry for them. But anyway they were not going to the butcher's knife, and their lot would probably be happier than that of the cattle.

Most ranches have herds of *goats*, because they are paying animals. From five hundred to ten thousand goats are, as a rule, to be found on an hacienda.

Each herd, consisting of twelve hundred, is looked after by a *pastor*. He goes forth with his flock every morning, stays with them at their pasturage all day, and brings them back to camp before night-fall to avoid the wolves. On a well-organised ranche every goat is counted, so that each evening if any are missing they may be sought for and found.

There is always a ready market for goat flesh at a ranche, the price varying from 3 to $3\frac{1}{4}$ dollars (Mexican = 6/- to 7/-) per head; this includes the skins, which the purchaser re-sells for about half-a-crown.

It is the custom on a ranche for the master to find rations for all his hands, and while the cowboy is given beef, the ordinary labourer receives goat, which is the natural diet of the poorer classes who are sufficiently well off to eat meat at all. Goat-flesh is quite good, indeed many people would not know it from mutton unless they were told to the contrary; but in Mexico, as in all warm climates, the meat is invariably tough because it cannot be properly hung. Oh, the joy of tender beef and mutton after months of stringy, newly-killed food! Could anything taste more delicious than an English sirloin of beef, or an American chop?

As I am a warm advocate of riding astride for women, perhaps it may be well to describe why and how I came to adopt that mode. My first long expedition was in Iceland, where on one occasion a girl and I accomplished a distance of 163 miles in three days and a few hours.* This was in a land where there were no bridges, rivers had to be swum by the ponies, there were no roads, and rough paths and dangerous mountain passes formed the track. Such rides could never be accomplished on a side-saddle, whereas mounted astride the woman is no longer handi-

* "A Girl's Ride in Iceland."



A goat herd.



Making tortillas, the staple food of the country.

capped, and provided she have equal strength with her male companion, can go where he goes. I believe I was the first to advocate riding astride in book form ; the volume instituted that long war of controversy "Should Women Ride Astride ?" in the *Field* and *Daily Graphic* about ten years ago. Oh, how some of these dear people jumped on me for "immodesty, indelicacy," and other words of condemnation ! To have written such sentiments was a crime, to have ridden in such style an offence against all propriety. But I still live !

Later I adopted the same plan in Morocco, and, much to the surprise of my good friends, in Mexico—where they are barely accustomed to the fact of a woman mounting a horse at all, and certainly not on a man's saddle—yet I hope and trust I succeeded in riding down their prejudices.

There is nothing new in sitting astride. Women who have to traverse long distances on horseback in foreign countries, invariably do so ; indeed, every woman in England rode in this manner until side-saddles were introduced by Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II., and many continued to ride across the saddle until a much later date.

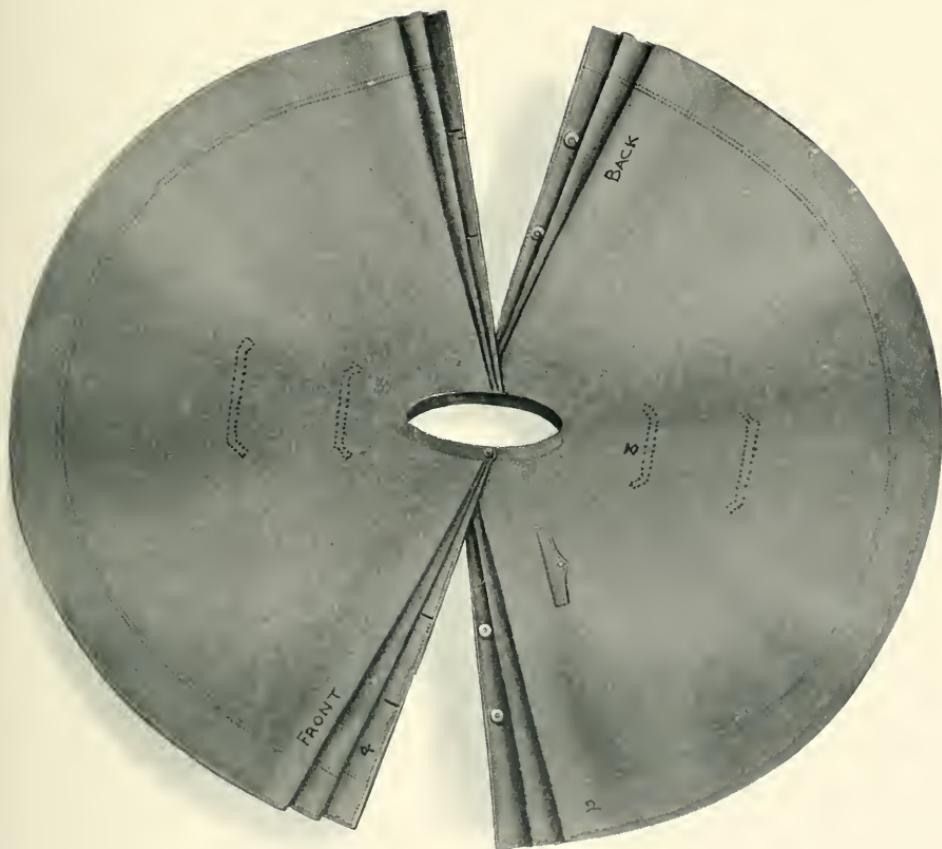
As a girl I followed the hounds, both fox and stag, on a side saddle, in which position I rode from the time I was seven years old ; therefore I have no prejudice against that fashion, and am perfectly aware that it looks more elegant, and one might add, more feminine on ordinary occasions. But, for purposes of travel, where rough country has to be crossed, when eight or ten hours a day are spent in the saddle, it is absolutely essential for the comfort of both the woman and the horse that the former should ride astride. Riding man-fashion is far less tiring, the position is perfectly natural, and in no way injurious to health. It is also preferable, because the spine is not twisted. As women ride at the present moment, horses with sore backs are unfortunately no rarity ;

it is true these galls are caused by bad riding, still such things are more easily avoided by the use of a man's saddle. A horse is sooner knocked up when ridden by a woman than a man, yet the latter is usually the heavier weight ; but then he is properly balanced.

Then again, in mountainous districts where the animals have to clamber from one rocky prominence to another, it is positively unsafe to be seated on a side-saddle, and when the path leads round the edge of a precipice on the near side, should the horse stumble and fall, he naturally falls on top of his unfortunate rider, who has not the slightest chance of extricating herself. There is no doubt about it that sitting sideways is absolutely dangerous for rough country work ; is injurious to a woman's health, is always fatiguing, and besides knocks up a mount much sooner than riding man-fashion.

Having advocated that women should ride astride for long distances, it may be well to describe the kit which experience has proved to be the most useful. Ordinary riding breeches and boots are absolutely indispensable, and if the country traversed be in any way tropical, brown boots are preferable, as they are not so heating to the feet. They must be high, as insects bite, and thorns prick, and anyone who has been in the Tropics knows that they can do both with considerable severity.

Being so far attired for riding the difficulty centres in the skirt or habit. On most occasions it is impossible to carry anything but the lightest luggage ; for instance, in the Mexican mountains everything had to be transported by means of mules. Therefore, as one practically lives in one's riding-dress, it is essential that riding-dress should be as comely as possible, something that will represent a skirt in ordinary wear, and yet be practicable for riding. I find closely-woven serge or whipcord the best materials, as these while light do not tear. Having selected the material, it is



1. Mrs. Alec Tweedie's Divided Skirt, for riding astride. Shown lying flat open.
2. Deep Hem.
3. Elastic bands (inside) to pass the legs through.
4. Folds, which button over for walking.

not difficult to make the skirt. It must be narrow, and gored for standing; some six or eight inches from the ground does not look outrageously short, even at a luncheon party, and when mounted will come down well over the instep, as may be seen in the photographs (Chap. XIX.). The skirt can fasten either at the back or in front, because in both places a large fold of the material is necessary to make the habit sit well; the front is preferable. The material can be drawn perfectly tight over the hips, but before and behind it must be full near the hem, and therefore must be folded in, two or three inches at the waist. The back opening is better sewn securely so far down as the saddle (when the rider is seated), that is to say, about twelve inches from the waist belt. When riding the skirt falls over loosely on both sides, and is kept from blowing about or getting out of place by a couple of elastic straps inside each side piece, through which the legs pass. Its own weight, and the width of the hem are capable of keeping it down even in a strong wind. When mounted the rider from the off or near side looks as if wearing a habit, and nobody can tell she is seated astride, unless immediately before or behind her.

When off, if the skirt is well cut and the pleats full, it falls into position by itself, and looks like an ordinary skirt, but in order to be more sure that it will remain closed when clambering about stony ruins or jumping over streams, it is well to have a couple of buttons about a foot apart to fasten both the back and front openings. These can be adjusted or undone in a moment, and when secured nobody can possibly tell that the wearer is not dressed in an ordinary skirt.

To be more sure of keeping the habit in its place, when mounted an elastic band can be fastened from the back to the front of the skirt so that it may not ride above, or over the seat of the saddle.

A habit of this kind is very simple, and anyone can

manufacture it out of an old skirt at home. Indeed, the one depicted in the photographs, showing the skirt both off the horse and on, was made in this way. I am perfectly aware that a smart habit bodice would look better, and if the photograph had been taken in Piccadilly, should have donned one for the occasion, but as this picture was a "snapshot" some seven thousand miles away from Piccadilly, in the wilds of Aztec ruins under hot Southern skies, a shirt was cooler, if not so becoming, and a sombrero more practical if not so smart as a top hat!

It is hardly necessary to repeat the well-known maxim that whatever exercise we may be taking it is advisable to wear light flannel rather than cotton, and this applies to riding as much as to anything else. Therefore, ye women travellers, before starting on long and fatiguing expeditions, lay these facts to heart, and remember that, as mentioned above, cross-riding is no novelty, that ladies in the old days mounted in that manner, that all native women who ride for business and not for pleasure invariably sit astride. My own experience only endorses the advisability and practicability of adopting this sensible and convenient style.

Ranche life is very interesting ; but it generally leads to little. After talking matters over with a number of Englishmen, I found they seemed to be of opinion that physically it is a pure healthy life ; but mentally, an utter failure. It is existence in the present, but offers no future. Men so situated cannot make enough money to save, and thus they become alienated from their families, from their country, and all home ties ! For the first five years or so it is all romantic and wild ; they ride and shoot, sleep in the open, forget top hats and dress clothes, and feel like heroes of romance and adventure. Freedom from conventionality has its charms at first, yet a few years later they long for that very conventionality, long to feel the necessity for wearing a collar or having a shave, yearn to

have a chat with a lady, and to feel the gentle influence of the female sex.

"I even long to hold a good woman's hand," a man once said to me ; "it elevates and refines a chap ; it makes him try to be better than he is."

"But," as several men remarked, "I do not feel it would be fair to marry. I should not care to take a wife from any but my own class of life, and it would be wrong to ask any lady to come to such isolation, such monotony and loneliness, as life in a ranche must prove to a woman. We have our work, and that often takes us away from home for days at a time ; would it be right to ask a girl to stay alone in such a far away place, without a soul to whom she can speak, or would it be fair to take her with me to distant parts of the ranche, where she would have to sleep in a waggon, or perhaps on the ground ?"

It is a difficult problem, this ranche life, and one which apparently affects men in different ways. Many take to drink ; some become reserved and almost morose ; others, on the other hand, have such a longing for human sympathy, that they cannot talk or hear enough when they meet a stranger. All, whatever their character, seem to become more chivalrous to women than men who live constantly in their midst, and cannot, apparently, do enough for one of the gentler sex. They will cook a little surprise for her, boil warm water for her bath, gather flowers and put them in her room, get up early to catch fish for breakfast, ride miles before daylight to fetch a pound of butter, collect wood and light a fire—not only think of a hundred little kindnesses, but actually do them, with all the grace of a courtier in the days when knighthood was in flower. It is very sweet of them ; but it is a hard school in which they have learned, poor things !

There are absolutely no women ! It was all very strange, after being entertained at lunches, receptions and dinners

by some of those great Women's Clubs in the States, after meeting literally hundreds of the brilliantly clever, smart women of America, to travel in Mexico, and hardly ever see a female, not even a servant !

There are not enough men to go round in England, and there are a dozen men to every woman in Mexico, so let me recommend the possibilities of that country to old maids.

Probably the warmth of the climate does not make fatty matter a necessity, for, as we all know, the colder the land, the more fat is required, hence the Esquimo's love of blubber and oil. Anyway, butter is an almost unknown commodity, even in Mexico City.

On the ranches there is no butter, because there are too many cows with too little milk. What butter there is in the cities is simply awful. It is made without salt, is perfectly white, like lard, and if its tastelessness guarantees its purity, I am Goth enough to prefer a little salt. At the hotels it is served for foreigners ; and actually, the American residents in the capital itself send to the United States for their table butter. In really Mexican homes it is seldom seen. At their early coffee, they dip their roll, or sweet bread, into the liquid, and the same with the afternoon chocolate.

The native of Mexico is practically always an Indian, while the high-class Mexican is a Spaniard, or of Spanish descent, the different characteristics of the two races being strongly marked. The cowboys of Mexico are generally Indians. They are supplied with horses and saddles by their masters, and they are usually paid about ten dollars (Mexican money=20s.), a month, with food and lodging. Every ranche has a little shop where the hands can buy things. Their chief requirements in this line—for from their ranche rations they eke out enough to support an entire family—are tobacco and hats. Large sums are spent on the hat, which often costs from twenty to thirty dollars, and is trimmed with silver cord, embroidered on felt :

however poor a man may be, he always saves up for his hat. In other respects, he and his family may be in rags ; but a fine head covering is considered a necessity.

On their feet the natives wear a sort of sandal, without stockings ; but cowboys when riding, wear boots in order to protect them from sun and thorns. Calico, prints, muslin for dresses, cloth for men's clothes, coats, trousers, and blankets are all sold at the hacienda shop, and the goods charged to the cowboy's account, which is usually overdrawn.

The days of slavery are over ; nevertheless, in many of the native Mexican ranches there are still "peons" (*i.e.*, more or less slaves), who are bound to their masters by debt. They are, indeed, so bound, that they cannot get away, and if they try to escape the master sends for them, and generally manages to evade the law, and insists on their return. The following facts show to what magnitude the "peons system" has grown. On one ranche in San Luis, where about a thousand persons are employed, the total debt of the peons amounts to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars ! Anyone buying a ranche of this sort is obliged to purchase the peons' debt, which practically means buying them as slaves. The law while prohibiting this system, practically encourages it.

I said just now that a cowboy earned about one pound sterling a month ; and alas, in the Southern States and in Mexico there are hundreds of public school boys and University men earning that miserable sum, and only too glad to get it. To my personal knowledge, the saddest of lives are being dragged out on some of those ranches. One man, about twenty-eight years of age, told me his story, which brought tears to my eyes.

" My father was a clergyman in Yorkshire, who had nine children," he said ; " I was sent to a public school and the 'Varsity, and chose the army as my profession. I was the eldest, and the family cheese-parings were great to give me

that education at all ; but I never stopped to think about the fact then. I went up as a 'Varsity candidate and failed. My father was very much distressed.

" 'Bob,' he told me, 'I have not the money to pay for you again ; but if you promise to work this time, my boy, and are certain to get through, I will borrow it.' He did so. I failed again. Poor old father ! I realise now what the disappointment must have been to him ; I feel all the sorrow and suffering my mother must have endured while they were paying off that loan."

He was a fine fellow, and I honoured him for the tear which he wiped away as he chokingly continued :—

" Well, I had thrown away my chance ; I had played the fool, and to add to everything else, contracted debts. What was I to do ? I, who had misused all the help that had been given me ? A few pounds were somehow collected, and I was shipped off to Mexico. I had no profession, I knew nothing practical, nobody wanted me. On the verge of starvation I was lucky enough to get a berth as a cowboy, and here I am, after six years, earning £12 a year, and with very little prospect, so far as I can see, of ever doing any better. There is no future in it. The excitement is all gone after the first year. My associates are illiterate—good fellows in their way—but this is merely existence, not life.

" They send me papers from home ; I am too tired even to read them. When the day's work is over I get something to eat and tumble into my blanket, and with daylight I have to be up and out again.

" Fool, fool, fool that I was," he exclaimed almost passionately, " to turn aside from good chances at home, where I was surrounded by love, refinement and learning, and chuck my life to the winds as I have done."

Poor fellow ! My heart ached for him, and yet his case is only one of hundreds in a like position.

Then, again, I met a man who used to drink hard in a London office, besides doing other evil things. He was shipped off to Mexico.

“On my honour,” said he, “I have never once taken a drop too much since. I am no teetotaller, that seemed cowardly, but I’m sober, and getting on well in consequence. My folly at home killed my mother ; I realise it all now it is too late, and no future success can ever make me an inwardly happy man. The world may smile, may forgive and forget, but I find one can never forget one’s own sins.”

Poor fellow. The iron had eaten into his soul. Remorse is bitter, but he was doing his best, and the kindly hand of time may help him to be happy again some day. To have conquered sin is finer than never to have met temptation. But a truce to moralizing !

Writing of horses and a round-up reminds me of a funny little incident which occurred in New York. I had not long been in the States, and was in Fifth Avenue one afternoon, when it began to rain. I had on my best hat, and was carrying no umbrella. Turning into the doorway of a shop, I waited some minutes for a cab, there being no tramcars in that particular street—the only really peaceful street in New York, where life is spent hanging on to a strap !

No cab passed, so I walked up to the counter of a druggists, to find, to my surprise, a series of taps and other queer arrangements that looked like American drinks. Turning to the young man behind the counter, I said :—

“Do you think I could get a hansom cab here ?”

“No, ma’am,” he rejoined civilly ; “but I’ll mix you a ‘Horse’s Neck,’ ” and at once proceeded to do so, that being the latest “soft drink.”

Are drug stores prophetic ? Iced drinks on one side, and medicines on the other ! The term, “soft drink,” for

non-intoxicants is as quaint as that expressive :—“Have a smile ?” meaning a drink of more fiery nature.

It was at a ranche that I first experienced a Mexican “norther.” Nothing in the world is more horrible. It is “awful,” in the true sense of that often misused word. A London or Chicago fog brings despair to the housewife when it arrives just before a dinner-party, and turns her brightly shining silver yellow ; but a smoky fog is a mere bagatelle when compared with a real Mexican “norther.”

It had been very hot for a couple of days—between eighty and ninety degrees in the shade in November ; the air, however, was heavily laden with moisture, like a Turkish bath. Everyone, therefore, predicted a “norther,” and everyone, alas ! was right.

First the wind got up—from the north, of course ; the air grew more and more chilly, until it swept over those vast plains of Texas, like an arctic blast. The wind increased in force as the atmosphere became colder. All this was endurable—one could bear a terribly cold windy storm—but the wind had a companion, and that was the *dust*. Usually a ranche is all dust ; the grass is in plots and patches, between which lie acres—thousands and thousands of them—composed of sand and prickly pears. Once the norther sets in, *all* the dust gets loose, and whirls and hurtles about in a storm which defies description.

It was my fate, alas ! to drive twelve miles in such a gale. Under other circumstances, we could easily have accomplished the distance in three hours, but we took four and a half. Gates had to be opened, and a big man could only with difficulty re-shut them ; every moment it seemed as if the coach must be blown over. Eyes, nose, mouth, ears, were choked with dust—hard, sharp, cutting, sandy dust—and by the time we reached home, my raven locks were grey. People are said to have gone white in one night ;

I accomplished that feat in a few hours. Think of it! Think of long hair and sandy grit—even my eyebrows and eyelashes were white, while my face was so yellow and begrimed, that I hardly recognised myself in the mirror from which I had to remove a dusty coating before I could see in it at all.

Those dust-storms, and consequent head washings in a basin, were terribly trying to the temper, and I always looked forward to the day when I should reach Mexico City, and enjoy the delights of a hairdresser's douche. It seems impossible, but it is nevertheless true, that up-to-date, smart and fashionable as that city undoubtedly is, there is no lady's coiffeur from end to end of the town.

On arrival I asked a friend where I could find one; he promptly replied:

“There is not such a thing.”

“Then what on earth do the Mexican ladies do?” I enquired.

“I think they have their hair washed at home by their maids,” answered he.

“But I have no maid, and at present no home; what is to happen to me?”

He finally promised to find someone, and accordingly the following day, as arranged, “el barbero” duly arrived at the appointed hour. I smiled upon him, and he smiled upon me, and we proceeded amicably to a basin. The conversation was necessarily limited, for I had not then been long in Mexico, and Spanish was his only language. It took a vast amount of persuasion to get the gentleman to rinse my hair sufficiently, in spite of my determined cry of “Encore agua!”

At last that difficulty was got over, and we had become quite friendly when he began to rub. It must be owned that fine hair which is long enough to sit upon, is difficult to wash and easy to tangle. The gentleman did not

succeed in drying my head to my satisfaction, but in spite of many efforts, I could not make him understand. At last a bright idea struck me, remembering dry champagne was called "sec," I might try the word upon the barber. Accordingly, I said :

" Non sec ! "

" Si, Señora," replied he, for I had hit the right nail on the head, *seco* being the Spanish word, so there was some association between dry champagne and my hair.

So far so good, but when the time came for him to depart, not yet feeling quite satisfied about my tresses, which were scarcely so dry as I thought they ought to be, I kept a towel over my shoulders, put a chair with its back to the balcony, and proceeded to sit in the glorious sunshine, to let the rays of that warming orb penetrate where the towel could not. The barber danced about, he talked volubly, I only shook my head, for I could not understand. He became more and more excited, he patted me on the back, explained many things about "sol" and "sombra," but I could only imagine the man had gone suddenly mad, and persistently sat drying my hair.

At last he departed. About a quarter of an hour later, when I was just thinking of retiring from my sunny corner, a knock came at my door.

" May I come in ? " queried the voice of the friend who had sent the barber.

" I will try and be ready in a few minutes," I replied, " but my hair is down."

" I know it is," he answered, " that is why I have come."

This was surprising, but before I had time to say any more he opened the door, and with an agonised expression, exclaimed :

" Please get out of the sun at once."

" What *do* you mean ? " I asked, more perplexed than ever.

“ The barber came round to my office and told me you insisted on sitting in the sun with a damp head, that no words of his could persuade you to do otherwise, and as he was sure you would die of fever, he begged me to come and rescue you from the jaws of death ! ”

This idea of the danger of exposing a wet head to the sun’s rays, universally prevails in Mexico.

Such were my subsequent experiences : meantime I tried to pour water out of the jug—out came a yellow fluid ; the water was entirely coated with dust, the basin was a mass of sand, the toilet table was quite yellow, and as I lifted a brush, its shape remained clearly imprinted below. The sponge was full of grit—a sort of sandy grit that hurt ; even the tooth-brush had not escaped. No words can describe the horrors of it all. A “ norther ” gets under the doors and through the cracks of the windows, and even after washing and tidying up, when one eventually goes to bed weary and exhausted, ’tis but to find the pillow and sheets all full of sand.

Fortunately, these “ norther ” are not very frequent, but a few occur each winter, when nothing escapes their touch, and on a ranche, with miles and miles of sand stretching in every direction, they are enough to break any house-keeper’s heart. They fill her kitchen, her pots, her sitting-room and her ornaments with sand, ruin her clothes, and everything she most values, poor soul ! Only washing materials and wickerwork furniture are really practical articles for wear, anything else can be destroyed by a “ norther ” in an hour.

That experience, repeated later in varied degrees, was one which might surely be numbered with black fogs, mosquitoes and moths, among the plagues of this earth.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE ON A PRIVATE CAR.

WHAT could be more delightful, after eight or nine nights spent in Pullman railway cars, surrounded by snoring humanity, than to be invited to pass a few days in a private railway coach belonging to the General Manager of an important line?

A room, think of it, actually a room, and all to myself! No upper and lower berths turned up by day, or pulled down by night, no conductors or darkie porters continually passing in and out; but a real bedroom to myself and the run of a whole car! Oh, the joy of those private cars, in several of which I spent many happy weeks in Mexico!

Let me first describe my chamber. It was twelve feet by seven—as big as a ship's cabin, and quite as convenient, with far more height and much more air, as it boasted three nice windows, to say nothing of ventilators in the roof. There was a double bed, with splendid springs and the downiest of pillows, beneath which were large commodious drawers. High up above the bed was a shelf a foot wide, on which many things could be stowed. Then there was a small hanging wardrobe between the bed and the door, with a large mirror set into its frame. Imagine a cheval glass in a private car! To such luxury are these homes on wheels brought nowadays!

A wash-hand stand, with dressing-table attached and drawers underneath, a seat and an armchair, completed the



A private car.



Barred windows, to prevent thieving.

furniture ; yet in spite of this splendour there was room to turn round, breathe and feel a veritable Queen !

The car itself was a full-sized Pullman ; at one end was the sitting-room, containing four lovely armchairs covered in pale green silk brocade, to match the window-curtains, and a couple of sofas that could be made into beds when necessary, a writing-table, several shelves, while all the back was glass to form what is called an "observation car," with a balcony beyond, and as a private car is always at the rear of a train, the view of the country was magnificent.

Beyond this drawing-room, a couple of bed-rooms (similar to that previously described), and a lavatory opened off the passage ; then came the kitchen, where a darkie cook concocted most delicious dishes, while, at the end of the corridor, was the dining-room. What more could mortal man wish for than to spend a short time in such a car, being shunted at desirable spots, and while leaving it by day, feeling it was always waiting to offer a home at night, one in which packing and unpacking were consequently unnecessary ? Only those who have travelled some thousand miles in a few weeks, with constant stoppages, hotels and Pullman "sleepers," can realise the blissfulness of life on a private car.

Many rich people who travel about a good deal have their private car, which, at a cost of from fifteen to twenty first-class tickets, can be hooked on to any train. If there be a party of half-a-dozen, the expense is not as great as would at first appear.

The hotels in Mexico are so bad as a rule, that the nicest way to travel about is in a private car. This saves hotel bills, endless 'buses and cabs for luggage, as well as that constant packing and unpacking which wearies the soul and sorely tries the temper of the "best-regulated" traveller.

Fifteen first-class tickets must be taken in order to hire a car. Suppose the tickets be from the frontier to Mexico

City ; that car, if so desired, may dally for weeks on the way ; the fifteen tickets allow that, and the hire is fifty dollars (Mexican) a day. Now if there be six or eight people in the party it will be readily seen that the rent with extra tickets is not very dissimilar to the hotel charges. A cook and porter accompany the car, and arrangements can be made by which the former undertakes to feed the party at so much per head. The darkies cook, wait, and discharge all their duties surprisingly well.

Two or three months can be spent most happily in Mexico in this manner, an occasional trip away from the car for a night or two into the wilder regions is all that is necessary. By this luxurious means the traveller takes his house along with him.

Monterey is one of the chief business towns of Mexico. It is situated in the north, where American and English influence is much felt. Still in spite of chimneys and manufactories it remains a strangely primitive place. Flat-roofed houses remind one of the East ; yellow, blue, pink, or white-washed walls with green shutters announce a sultry clime ; a splendid palm, mimosa, castor-oil or banana tree whispers that one is nearing the tropics, and behind the town stands a fine range of hills.

The better houses have iron bars before the windows ; this is to prevent stealing, for the windows are kept constantly open.

An English resident told me one night, when asleep, he dreamed a dream, and in that dream he thought his bed-clothes were slipping away. Suddenly something seemed to jerk, and he woke in a fright to find his sheets and blankets disappearing between the iron bars of his window ! Even iron bars won't stop Mexican thieves, who have a clever way of fixing a hook at the end of a pole, and so manage to confiscate odds and ends on which they have set their hearts.

The roads of Monterey are paved with red bricks ; but

these bricks are cemented together, and not loose, as in the quaint little island of Borkum, in the North Sea—the only other place where I have seen brick roads, and the one spot on earth from which Jews are banished.

I noticed several queer stone rings on my way from the station, and on asking what they were, the railway official who kindly acted as my guide replied:—"They are wells. People make a well first, and if they strike water proceed to build up their house."

This is sound wisdom, no doubt, nevertheless half-a-dozen wells look rather strange to the uninitiated.

It was a cold morning as we drove from the station, and all the natives were wrapped in their blankets. How picturesque they looked, with their big hats and flowing coverings of every shade and hue! Like vultures they stormed the railway carriage, touting for everything under the sun, and all of them talking at once.

Tram-cars, drawn by a couple of sad-looking mules, had taken the place of the swift electric trams of the North, and the natural indolence of a Southern people was noticeable after the bustle of Chicago or New York.

At Monterey I saw the Guggenheim smelting works, one of half-a-dozen large smelters at present in regular work. Mr. William Guggenheim, a delightful American, told me they employ a couple of thousand men to extract the lead and silver from the ore. Monterey promises hereafter to be the great business centre of Mexico, and judging from the numbers of Americans, English and Germans already settled in the place—which boasts 73,000 inhabitants—it is almost as cosmopolitan as Chicago, to which prosperous town Mexicans ambitiously liken it.

Speaking of Chicago how easily things can be misunderstood! I was staying in that city some weeks previously, and wishing to send a wire to London, telephoned to an old friend at the Calumet Club asking him what time the

message would arrive in London, as I did not want it to be delivered in the middle of the night.

"If I send it about eleven o'clock, before going to bed, it will arrive in the morning," he replied.

"Very well, please write it down, 'Joachim, Sandringham Club, London. Accept.'"

"What?" was called through the telephone.

"'Joachim, Sandringham Club, London. Accept,'" I repeated.

"Shall I sign it Tweedie?" he enquired.

"Oh no, that will be all right," I answered.

"Well, I never, you accept a chap by wire, and don't even sign it!"

This was too much, the absurdity of the thing flashed across my mind. He thought I was accepting a proposal of marriage, while it was merely a wire to Miss Eugenie Joachim, the niece of the famous violinist, to say my name could be added to the programme for his London Concerts in 1901!

From such trifles grave mistakes occur.

In Monterey, there are good houses and fine buildings, almost side by side with the most terrible native huts. The men working in some of the large factories live in hovels built of bamboo reeds, which are often so small and low that a man cannot stand upright in his own home. They look like gipsy tents, and yet the tenants are content to live in them year after year. A thatch of palm leaves lets in the rain, bamboo walls admit the wind, and the floor is mother earth. If a man possess a pig he is considered wealthy, and that pig shares his home. If he have a bed he is much to be envied, for old sacks thrown on the bare ground form the Indian's usual couch. In the middle of the hut—which probably measures twelve feet by eight—is his cooking-stove, made by placing two or three bricks on the ground, and the smoke issuing therefrom finds its way

out between the palm leaves, which in the same manner let the rain in.

The family possessions consist of a square tin can—which originally held oil—and is universally used for hot water, or for washing the clothes of the family or even for cooking in a large way. There is always a stone trough on four legs—*metate*—so named from the lava rock of which it is made, and this is used for grinding the Indian corn which the housewife makes into *tortillas*. She sits on her heels in true native fashion, and rubs a small roller up and down until she has ground the corn. This, with water, she makes into dough, takes a small quantity in her hand, pats it out flat until it is the size of a plate and very thin, then she puts it into an iron pan and bakes it over the fire, thus preparing the staple food of the family. A brown bean known as *frijoles* is also largely used. Two or three artistic-looking pottery jars complete the list of worldly goods, and thus one can see that these people are literally so poor that they could not possibly be poorer and yet keep body and soul together. Their little straw huts may be covered with lovely purple convolvulus, known as “morning glory,” and a cat or a hen may bring gaiety or an occasional egg to their home.

They cannot read or write, they do not know how to think; all they want is food and shelter, and so their animal existence continues year in, year out. Björnson, the great Norwegian writer, says that an agricultural labourer is happier with his spade than the literary man with his pen. If this be true, and mere animal existence a joy, the native Mexican has surely reached Elysium!

Scarcity of labour is one of the crying evils of Mexico. The country is sparsely populated, only about fifteen millions, and although prolific (eight is quite a usual number of children to be born in a family), more than half of them die in infancy. *Tortillas* and *pulque* are hardly proper food and

drink for a baby, yet on such diet are they nourished by their ignorant parents, the resulting infant mortality being appalling. Medical men in Mexico will have to enforce more attention to the laws of health, food and sanitation. It is not want of proper medicine or surgery, it is ignorance of nature's teaching that produces this enormous death-rate among native children.

Another cause of dearth of labour is that the Mexican Indian has no ambition. There is a hopeless apathy about him. He never thinks of saving money; he sees no comfort in independence, cares for nothing higher than the position and circumstances in which he was born. Some few men have risen to position and wealth; but even their example does not inspire the multitude. Mexicans are able to live on little. A large employer of labour told me that his greatest difficulty was to get the men to work *consecutively*. To encourage this he pays higher wages to those men who will work twenty days in a month, but, even with this inducement, the majority prefer idleness; not more than seven per cent. avail themselves of his offer. Many employers of labour testify that, as a rule, they gain nothing by advancing the rate of wages, because the generality of men will only work long enough in any one week to secure sufficient for their pressing needs during that particular week. They never think of the future, so long as they have a few cents in their pockets, and will loll about or gamble at the roulette tables until that small sum is exhausted.

Thus one sees that scarcity of labour, briefly stated, arises from—

- (1.) The want of population.
- (2.) Lack of ambition.

So enormously have the industries of Mexico increased since the introduction of railways, that the population cannot supply sufficient labour. This does not mean that it would be of any use for an Englishman to imagine a field of action

is waiting for him, for he could not live on the wages given, except for skilled labour, and that finds a market in almost all lands ; but it does mean that outside work has to be procured, and from China and Japan comes the supply. The Chinese are no longer allowed to settle in the United States ; but they may go into Mexico, for which purpose they come through America "in bond" ; *i.e.*, they are put into cars in San Francisco, a Government Official travels with them, and are only let loose when they reach Mexican soil. Every fortnight or so a coach laden with fifty or a hundred of these Chinese passes through the States ; the door is kept locked during the whole journey. These emigrants are chiefly employed at the mines, where there are whole settlements of them.

It is these mines which promise so great a future for Mexico.

It was on a fine November day in 1900, that Mr. Lorenzo Johnson, General Manager of the International Railway, picked me up in his private coach, the "Sabinas." My introduction to him came from Colonel Aldace Walker, Chairman of the Atcheson, Topeka, Sante Fé Railway, one of the most delightful friends I have in America. Alas ! I should rather say, "had," for Colonel Walker died suddenly only a few days after I sailed for England. My last Sunday in New York was spent with him and his family.

The day was an eventful one, for it chanced to be the inauguration of General Porfirio Diaz, as President of the Mexican Republic for the sixth time, and was consequently kept as a holiday, and day of rejoicing.

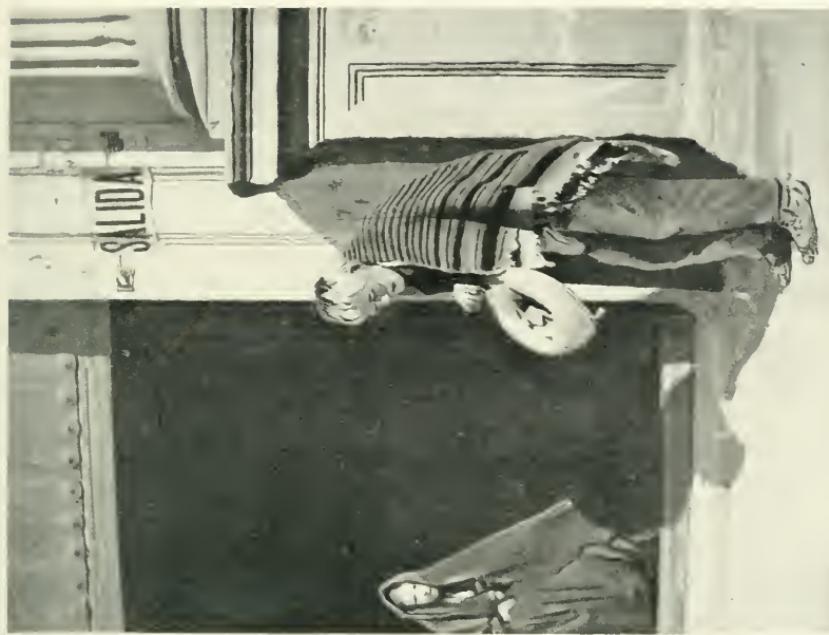
Electing a President seems a very different affair in Mexico from what it is in the United States. In the latter country I witnessed the frenzied excitement over the re-election of McKinley (October, 1900), when over one hundred thousand of the most respected citizens of New York formed themselves into a procession, and marched

through the city. In order to show the country that the wealth of America was ready to support McKinley against the democratic oratory and socialistic tendencies of Bryan and his party, this body—calling themselves the “sound money men”—turned out in force. They were really the Conservative party of America, if anyone dare apply such a term to men born in a Republic!

For five miles, in pouring rain, from early morning till late in the evening, that marvellous procession toiled along Broadway. It was, indeed, a strange sight to see these elderly millionaires, umbrella in hand, wading through mud and mire, each waving his flag on high to show his support of McKinley, the man under whose sway America has advanced so enormously. What a wonderful country it is! With the yells of a Chicago mob still in my ears, uttered when the news of McKinley's re-election was known, the lack of interest in Mexico over an election struck me as particularly strange. The fundamental laws of the country provide universal suffrage, it is true; but it has never been exercised, and the President is re-elected by his political following. The ordinary rancheros and cowboys know nothing about the election until they hear it is over, when they just nod and say nothing. As far as they personally are concerned, it appears of no consequence whatever.

The President, General Diaz, is a great Dictator, who began his career as a revolutionist. The day, however, on which this marvellous potentate—the greatest and wisest despot of modern times, whose acquaintance I was fortunate enough to make later—takes his vote of office, all the folk in every town make merry. In Monterey, where I chanced to be, there was a sham fight, and a very interesting fight it proved.

My host, Mr. Johnson, fetched me from the hotel, where a brick floor, many panes of glass missing from the window, and no latch whatever on the door, had not impressed me



A Mexican beggar.

[To face page 66.]



The writer viewing the sham-fight at Monterey in honour of General Diaz being re-elected President for the sixth time.

with the comfort of Mexican hotels in general. Little did I guess when I started in the "Sabinas" of all the wonders in store for me, the endless private cars, special trains or steamboats that were to be my lot. In my wildest dreams I could not have hoped that the President of Mexico would prove such a friend, that Governors of States would entertain me so royally, or that troops of soldiers would escort me through the mountains, yet all these marvellous things happened!

After driving to the station yard where the car stood awaiting our arrival, we sallied forth to see the soldiers assembled close by. There was nowhere to sit, and as standing is tiring, I ventured to suggest that we should get on the roof of one of the covered-in "box" cars, standing close at hand. My companion smiled at the idea, and remarked that the only way up was by means of the iron steps fixed in the side, which the railway men use.

"I'll try," I replied, and accordingly we climbed to the top of a freight car of the International Railway, where a splendid view of the sham fight rewarded us for our pains.

In front, on an open space of ground, both infantry and cavalry were assembled; the men were small in size, though tidy in appearance; but they seemed to know their work well, and the charge of the cavalry was particularly exciting.

Soldiers in Mexico are recruited from the prisons. It is a curious arrangement, but a fact nevertheless. Those gaol-birds make good soldiers, and being under supervision are unable to get into further mischief, while being utilised to serve their country.

The grim old chain of mountains must have smiled at this sham fight, if it remembered the valiant and bloody deeds of 1846, when Mexican troops, posted along the low ridge overlooking the valley, were assailed by the American army from the plains below, and utterly routed.*

* See General Howard's "Campaign of General Taylor."

After a delightful little dinner we set sail—no, that term will hardly do, despite the American cry, “all aboard”—so we will merely say that after being “switched on” to the night train bound for Durango—some four hundred miles distant, with a rise of nearly five thousand feet—away we went.

For the first time in my experience of railway cars, I managed to sleep fairly well, although the stoppages invariably woke me with a jerk, reminding me—despite my private room and capacious bed—that I was still on the track!

About breakfast-time we reached Torreon, where the International and Mexican Central Lines intersect. Torreon is not famous for anything in particular, but since the advent of the railroad, it is growing at wonderful speed into a commercial and manufacturing town. It was Sunday, and though still early, about two hundred and fifty idlers in bright-coloured blankets were loitering about. Chinese with their pigtails were “en évidence,” and the general “dolce far niente” air of a southern clime prevailed. What gay colouring, what an Oriental scene! The women were carrying pitchers on their heads, the men large baskets of fruit. Each man had a little trestle in his hand, and before a probable customer he fixed his table, and dexterously lifting the large basket from his head, placed it thereon. Here were vendors of hats and baskets, besides people whose chief excitement in life is to hang about a railway station. It is a “rendez-vous” just as the hall of a large American hotel is used as a business meeting place, much to the amazement of a Britisher, who on first entering to engage a room finds dozens and dozens of men all standing about and talking loudly.

The crowds at Torreon surprised me, but I found they were an ordinary occurrence at every station in Mexico. In most towns there is only one daily passenger train in



Native adobe house, without windows.



A Mexican market.

and out, and the inhabitants flock eagerly to see that train come in, just as folk at Dover or Calais turn out on a rough day to witness the arrival of the poor sea-sick passengers. The peons will idle about for hours, waiting for the train if it happen to be late. A smoke, a chat, and a loll at the station, are “à la mode” in Mexico.

Blind musicians appear at every station. Either there must be an exceptionally large number of blind folk in Mexico, or else all who are thus afflicted make a point of appearing on the station platforms, where they warble to the accompaniment of violin, guitar or mandoline, the instrument being often home-made.

Indians are certainly musical. It is, of course, their own native music they love—sad and doleful, as most native music is wont to be; but they will sing and play for hours on the slightest provocation.

Torreón was far more Mexican than Monterey; the foreign element which has crept into the latter town, was hardly noticeable at all, though many modern houses of brick and stone, two floors high, have been erected since the introduction of the railway. The houses, however, are mostly one storey with no window to the street, only large wooden doors, which when opened admit light. This arrangement is universal in Mexico; the smaller houses never have windows, and the door is the only available opening. It was extraordinary to notice among the poorer people the systematic avoidance of light and air. The door admits both, in a minor degree, but at night, when that aperture is shut, neither can enter. This led me to remark another thing. The Mexican Indian simply shrivels up in the cold; he is always poorly clad, and once the temperature falls he falls with it, and instead of bustling about to try and get warm, he simply sits down and shivers. A “norther” absolutely paralyzes him, not because of the dust which strikes horror to any creature accustomed to

cleanliness, but on account of the sharp cutting wind which accompanies it. His dark skin seems literally to turn pale; he refuses to work—indeed, he cannot, for cold petrifies him.

What a surprise the railway development of the last few years must have been to the native! The Mexican Central runs over 2,192 miles of country, and the Mexican National 1,120, besides which there are several other lines of considerable length. At first the native exhibited fear when he saw an engine, then stood open-mouthed, and finally availed himself of the train, as the numerous passengers in the third-class carriages prove.

There are curious laws in some countries in connection with railway affairs. One of the odd features of railway operations in Mexico is that train officials are promptly arrested and imprisoned in cases of personal injury to any one on the track, even when their innocence of blame is apparent! The stupidity of the native, however, is appalling! Not only will he walk along the station track—which has no platform—he will lie under the cars for shade and so universal is this habit, and so many heads have consequently been chopped off, that the railway officials have actually to search the sidings and rout out these people before the cars can be started!

Humboldt, when he visited Mexico, said it would be possible to lay railroads all over the country, and extraordinary as the idea then seemed in so mountainous a land, his prophecy is being fulfilled. The average speed, including stoppages, is about thirty miles an hour, which is wonderful when one remembers the high grades often passed over at such places as the approach to Zacatecas, the descent from Esperanza to Orizaba, or from San Luis Potosi to Pascon, on the Tampico division of the Central Railway, or from Puebla to Oaxaca, each of which has a four per cent. grade. On the other hand it must be remem-

bered that miles and miles and hundreds of miles of rail in Mexico run through perfectly flat valleys, where the expenses of building, maintaining and working are comparatively small.

It is strange in such a mountainous land to find so many perfectly flat valleys. One is led to suppose, especially from the sandiness of the soil, that millions of years ago they were vast inland seas. At any rate, these flat valleys have proved of enormous service in making railways, for sometimes twenty or thirty miles of perfectly straight track without any grade is found. When the line has to cross the mountains, and rise ten thousand feet, as it often does, the engineering displayed is amazing.

I said on a former page that one of the great wants of Mexico was labour; another great want—in the north at least—is water. This does not mean that there is no water, on the contrary, there is plenty in the wrong place—rivers and lakes are numerous; but there are also vast areas where neither lake nor river is to be found; therefore when the heavy rains come from May to October, they are usually wasted, for lack of storage. Without water there can be no life. The subject of irrigation is, however, at present much to the fore, and a great deal is now being done to supply this much-needed commodity, especially in Southern Mexico. If well irrigated much of the waste desert land of Northern Mexico could be made profitable. The railways are there; but enterprise to thoroughly irrigate the land, and turn it to agricultural account, is still lacking.

With labour, water and fuel, Mexico would soon become a veritable paradise.

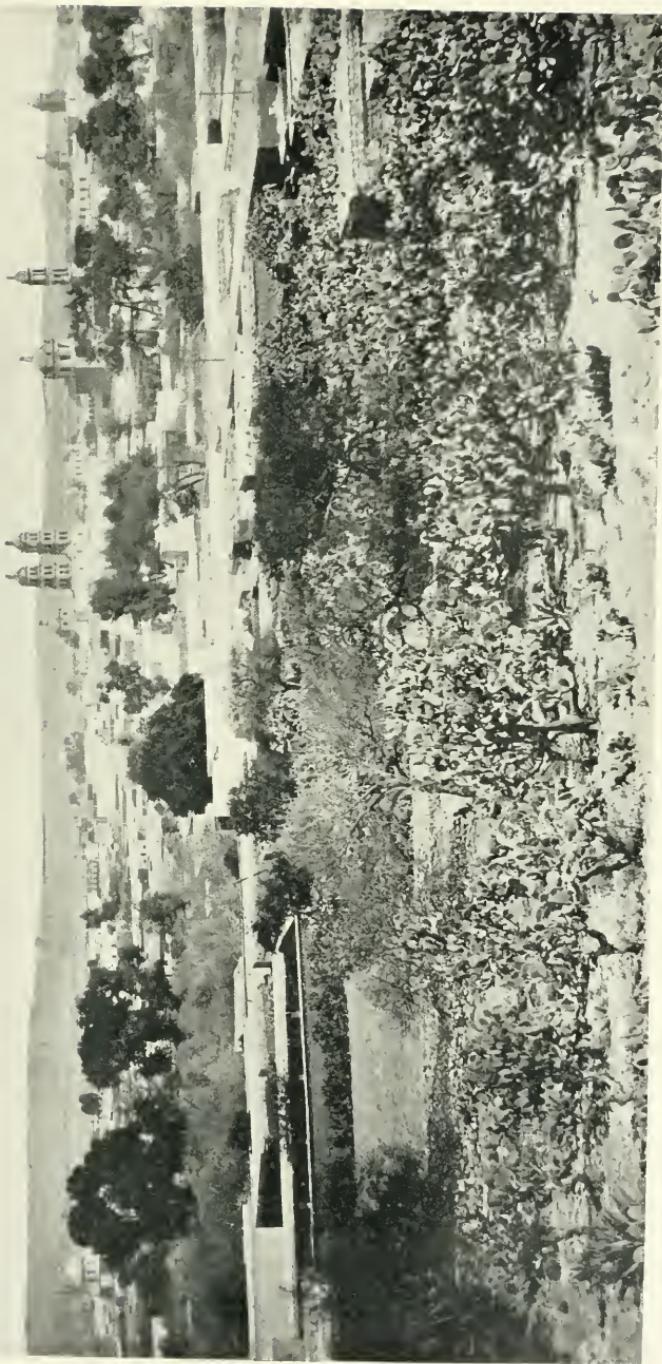
CHAPTER V.

A PEEP AT A COCK-FIGHT.

A COCK-FIGHT, termed *Los Gallos*, is a very favourite amusement. Barely thirty years since we had cock-fights in England, although they were actually forbidden by Act of Parliament in 1849. They could never have been so picturesque as one of these entertainments in Mexico, where every hat or blanket of the spectators has its especial colour and its charm.

On Sunday morning the cock-fights begin; then there is a pause for dinner and the usual siesta—every man, woman and child sleeps in Mexico from one to three—and about four o'clock the fray recommences. On driving up to the cock-pit a curious spectacle met our eyes. In the centre of an open space was an arena, probably a little more than eight yards in diameter, fenced in by a hoarding some three feet high. Round this circus-like arrangement were tiers and tiers of seats, occupied by about a couple of hundred men. Nearly all of them wore the enormous Mexican hat of straw or felt, and the majority sported a bright blanket as the day was chilly. Overhead—to keep off the expected sun—a sheet was hung, which gave a certain shadow to the scene and made the snap-shots failures.

We climbed up a ladder-like stair, and three rough-looking Mexican Indians, with innate politeness, vacated



Durango,

their seats, being evidently entertained at the advent of an Englishwoman.

The cock-fight in Durango was a strange and interesting sight. Below, in the arena, were twenty-eight men with as many cocks. Now a good cock, be it understood, is an expensive luxury, for while an ordinary one will cost about 12 dollars, a really good game cock of weight, breed, and comes of a strain of fighters, will fetch 50 dollars (Mexican), or £5 in English money. Many of the best cocks are imported from the United States, but when bred in Mexico, Japanese hens are generally used.

Some of the birds in the arena were beautiful; of various sorts and kinds, several game birds being among them; but they all seemed to be large and in fine plumage. Each bird had a leather cuff round his foot, to which he was secured by a string. Some of the cocks were standing about, all crowded cheerily in turn, while their owners caressed and stroked them. At one end of the ring a sort of major-domo sat with a box before him; he was apparently the umpire, and had something to do with the betting, which soon became fast and furious, the sums staked varying from 25 cents to 100 dollars.

After a great deal of talk and general fuss, the ring was cleared. The cocks were taken to the side to be weighed, just as jockeys are weighed-in before a race. Only two men remained, a gentlemanly-looking person with his cock under his arm, and a regular old beggar—judging by his appearance—also with his bird. Then the mysterious case in front of the umpire was opened, and lo, it contained the implements of war. In rows inside the case were thin, cruel-looking knives, with an upward bend, almost like a scythe. They were four or five inches long, and very sharp in the blade. Each man had chosen his spur or knife, its length varying according to the weight of the cock, and he now proceeded to attach it to his bird's

foot. Apparently they adjusted a leather band round the right foot into which the end of the blade was stuck. They then proceeded to bind the blade most securely to the back claw with string.

Having arranged this horrible weapon to their satisfaction, they put a leather shield over to protect it till the right moment arrived ; the spur was fixed to the right foot, and curved upwards. At a given signal the shield was removed, the President of the ring stepped into the middle of the arena, and drew three lines with his stick in the sand. At either side a man immediately crouched with his cock, sitting usual native fashion on his heels. He held his bird till its head was almost up to the middle line, and within a few inches of the beak of the rival cock. Up to that time the cocks had been most placid, then, as if by magic, up ruffled the feathers of both. Their owners drew them apart, and again faced them together. Twice this was done, each time more feathers ruffling up, and the second time their beaks opening in anger. Immediately each man spat upon his cock's head for luck, after which the birds were let loose, the proprietors stepping quickly back. Like furies, in a second the two cocks went for each other ; jumping right up into the air, they seemed to fight off their feet. One moment of deadly combat, and the cock belonging to the richer man lay dead. It was not really horrible, for it was almost instantaneous, and a far more merciful ending than the slaughter of an ordinary chicken for table use. This cock fought for two or three seconds for his life, and perished in the excitement of the fray with all his sporting instincts aroused ; thus he valiantly died on the battlefield ! If cock-fights always ended so quickly and mercifully there would be nothing cruel in them ; but, unfortunately, this is not always the case. One combat was enough for me, I had seen all I wanted—the ring, the enthusiasm of the spectators, the pluck of

the birds, and had luckily witnessed a practically painless ending, so I went away. Alas! Horrors of endless cuts and hacks, and long drawn out tragedies sometimes occur at such contests, when the birds lie bleeding and panting, and yet struggle to rise again, for they say a cock fights even after he is dead!

Mexicans have a wonderful way of sending fighting cocks by train. They take a piece of board about five feet long and a foot wide. Then they buy the very cheapest sombreros (hats) they can get. They double the brims together to form a basket, and put Mr. Cock inside. His feet go down into the head part; his tail sticks out at one end and his head at the other, while the two flaps of the brim meet over his back and keep his feathers from ruffling, and the edges are nailed to the board. Three or four cocks will travel on one board; they look like so many basket hats fixed like the rungs of a ladder on the board, until one sees a cock's head projecting at one end of each hat and his tail at the other. Their heads hardly look like cocks', because they are shorn of their combs, which are always given to the birds to eat for luck, and while still bleeding from the operation they swallow the dainty morsel. These combs are cut off so that their adversaries may not have such nice projecting objects at which to aim.

Sometimes the birds are carried from place to place in curious baskets.

There are regular trainers for *Los Gallos*, men who spend their time training the creatures, just as in other lands horses are trained for racing. The cocks are kept in rows in their separate little stalls, and each has his name painted above him, as in a racing stable.

El Mauser . . .	The Champion	Chato	Snub Nose
El Gorron . . .	The Sparrow	Gato	Cat

Each bird is fastened by a little chain to the floor.

Every day he is taken out for a run, and is allowed a dust bath to clean and preen himself. He is only fed once in twenty-four hours, and then on wet corn ; but before the fight he is given various luxuries, including raw meat and sherry. Cocks never fight until they are two years old, and their first combat is often their last.

Cock-fights are not peculiar to Durango ; they are even more universal in Mexico than bull-fights, because less expensive, and consequently they form the usual Sunday entertainment at every village throughout the country from October till March.

In towns there is usually a cock-pit ; but in villages the fights take place at the street corners, as I myself have often seen.

Durango is also famous for its bull-fights ; only a fortnight before we arrived there had been great excitement over one. The entertainment was poor, the bulls showing no pluck ; the populace became angry, and fiercely threw stones and orange-peel, and even tore up their seats and hurled them down at the unfortunate matadors and animals. The mayor rose and called for order ; no one listened ; he shouted to the spectators to behave properly—no one paid any attention. They began to demolish the bull-ring and throw pieces of wood studded with nails about wildly. He commanded the soldiers—who are always present on such occasions—to clear the ring. Shots were fired, a furious row ensued, dozens of people were severely injured, and several persons killed. The Mayor subsequently forbade “another bull-fight pending his pleasure,” by way of punishment to the rioters.

Shooting is by no means uncommon in Mexico, and many of the people in towns like Durango, who are now living in wealth, were bandits a few years ago. Strangers are not molested, and in any ordinary way it is perfectly safe to go about ; but rows frequently occur among the



A cock-fight.



The water-seller.

residents themselves ; for about three halfpence they can get drunk on pulque, a fight ensues, and a stab in the back is the result. A man going off to his work in the early morning may find a dead body lying in the road-way. Of course there is an enquiry—the Mayor settles the matter, and, as a rule, sends the offender to join the army, military discipline being the ordinary punishment for most crimes.

We were walking back from the Plaza one night, after listening to the music, and while passing through a deserted street—where the lamps were only oil—we heard a drunken brawl. Two men were apparently fighting ; the one was noisily drunk, his companion seemed to be trying to take him home. They were reeling along, falling at intervals, and evidently quarrelsome. The houses in the street were, as usual, one storey high, flat-roofed, and entirely devoid of windows. Suddenly the more sober man clutched his comrade under the arms from behind, kicked open one of the doors, and the two tumbled into a little tenement shrouded in inky darkness. A piercing yell and a howl, then silence.

“Is he going to murder him ?” I asked, horrified at the spectacle.

“Probably not ; the more sober one is merely taking his friend home.”

“But surely we ought to go and see what has happened ; that terrible yell meant mischief ; there may be a woman and children in there, and those drunken brutes might murder them all. Let us go.”

“No, we had better not ; we strangers never interfere. If we did it would probably mean death to the gringo (foreigner), so come along and think no more about it.”

But I could not help thinking more about it, and worried all night over the hideous scene and terrified yell. Next morning I went back, on the plea of taking my Kodak to get some pictures, for I was sure I heard a woman’s cry,

and wondered what had happened to her and the children when those intoxicated ruffians tumbled in upon her.

There, at the door, stood a smiling woman, whose appearance testified all was right. Perhaps, poor soul, she was so accustomed to such midnight revels that she thought nothing of them.

It was bright, clear weather, the sun hot in the day-time, the temperature falling low at night ; but then Durango is six thousand feet above sea level, considerably higher than any mountain peak in Britain.

The market was a sight. Sweets (*dulces*) of all kinds of gorgeous and deadly hues are a source of trade, and little tables of confectionery under bright cotton umbrellas formed a pleasing picture. Sweet potatoes, covered with thick purple syrup, appeared to be a favourite food, and a brown dirty-looking cheese, made from the fruit of the prickly pear, considered a delicacy. In the middle of the market hall was a cock-pit, which looked like a large well or fountain, but was meant for a less useful, and more cruel, purpose. A quantity of the market produce was in curious open tubs made of ox-skin, with the hair on ; the Mexicans have evolved a way of making tubs, and even carts, out of strips of wood and cow-hide ! Their ropes are woven from the cactus, maguey and corn plants, or from horses' tails ; this latter fact was particularly interesting to me, as ropes made from horse-hair are the only kind in use in Iceland. Mexico shows distinct traces of Egyptian, Chinese, and other origins, of which more hereafter ; but the tail-rope reminds a traveller forcibly of Iceland.

How do the children of Mexico ever live to grow up ? Most of them die, it is true that the native population does not increase, but how is it that any survive ? On a sharp cold morning there is a touch of frost in the air. When the sun is out the thermometer stands at 90° or 100° in the shade, but in the cold of early morning, when every native

had on his blanket, a couple of stark-naked babies—aged two and three respectively—were squatting in a wooden packing-case in the market place. They were jumping up and down, playing and crying, but their mother was busy selling pottery, and just turned round and bade them be quiet. One punched the other's head and made it cry, but the mother, beyond scolding, took no notice of them. They were fighting over a bit of sugar cane, which both wanted to suck. They looked blue with cold ; they had absolutely not a rag on, and there was not a sack even at the bottom of the wooden box. Poor little shivering mortals, what a life !

Throwing dice at the market corners is a great entertainment, indeed, there is no form of gambling unknown to the Mexican, who will shake a bottle of cream up and down in one hand to make butter, and throw his dice for centavos with the other.

The Cathedral in Durango is handsome. The place is terribly priest-ridden, and the Church wealthy, but the gorgeous draperies, jewels, and laces are hidden away, and the altar decorations strike a stranger as tawdry in the extreme. In all the churches of Mexico, old lace has been superseded by common, machine-made curtain stuff, while cotton hangings have supplanted the silks and velvets of yore.

There are few seats in the churches, everyone kneels Greek fashion, anywhere on the stone flags, and we saw people crawling on their knees to the altar, others doing penance with their arms extended, and various curious forms of worship.

Outside the town, on a hill, is an old cathedral with a famous shrine. It is believed to be a sort of miraculous haven, where all diseases may be cured. At certain seasons of the year pilgrimages are made to this edifice, not only by the sick, but by their friends, for invalids who are too ill to go. They crawl up that long hill-side on their hands and knees to pray for deliverance from disease.

Old people are sometimes eight or ten hours getting up to the church ; but they think nothing of the fatigue, so great is their faith, so strong their religious belief in the pilgrimage.

On Saturday, when the natives of Mexico receive their wages, they redeem their things from pawn for Sunday. On Monday they go and put them all back again. Wonderful things may sometimes be found at the pawnshops, though filthy rags are more commonly met with than anything else.

In most towns the drinking water has to be fetched from public wells, men and women carrying it in pitchers on their heads. The scenes around the wells remind one of Venice, though the brown earthenware pots are Egyptian in shape. In many places there are water sellers who carry the liquid in large vessels on their backs, or wheel it round the town in a barrow.

In Durango, streams of water run down the street. They are covered in, except here and there, where a stone flag is left off for the buckets to be conveniently dipped. Sometimes the drain is at the side of the foot-path, at others in the middle of the road. The Indian takes off his hat, places it on the road beside him, and almost disappears after his can into the hole in his endeavours to get the water. Oil cans are universally used for this purpose. These openings in the street are terrible traps on a dark night, and mean a tumble of three or four feet for anyone who steps in by accident.

In Durango there is music in the Alameda every evening. This is a thoroughly Mexican custom, and a funny one, too, in some ways. Alameda means, and is, a sort of public square which is to be found in every town. The Mexicans are musical, even the poorest Indians sing and play to amuse themselves. On one occasion we were passing a few huts made of bamboo reeds, and hearing a noise peeped in at one of the openings—doors there are

none. There a man was singing "La Golondrina"—a sort of national hymn—to the accompaniment of a harp. Such a harp! He had made it himself out of bits of a chair and the leg of a wooden bedstead. It really was a wonderful production; and the sounds emitted were not at all bad. We admired his ingenuity, and would have bought anything so eminently quaint; but he prized his handiwork more than silver, and declined to part with it.

To return to the Alameda. Mexican people like to walk abroad in the dark—of course there is no twilight. About six o'clock on a winter's day, night has settled down, and then the inhabitants turn out in shoals to pace up and down the Alameda. This may seem strange; but it is the way they were brought up—to come out, like the bats and owls, at night. Except in Mexico City—which is more cosmopolitan—the men all walk on one side and the women on the other; but reverse ways, so that they meet one another. It is a curious mode of procedure, and to our mind hardly amusing, yet thus they trudge round and round for an hour or so every evening. A man will time his place to pass the girl of his choice quite close, and we have seen little notes and flowers thrust into her hand in passing, while "Mamma" walked apparently quite unsuspectingly by her side.

Love-making in Mexico is a queer affair. A man admires a girl he meets on the Alameda; follows her home, sees where his novia (lady-love) lives, and, if he be really taken with her, begins to play "the rôle of the bear." This means that he nightly stands outside her window (for the better-class houses have them), strange iron-barred windows like one sees in Italy. Some fine night the lady notices her "novio," and waves her hand; another she smiles. After months of waiting at his divinity's casement, he may throw her a flower or pass her a note; but it is only when he has proved his devotion that he may seek an introduction

and call, and finally ask for her hand. I saw a window in Durango where a man had played the bear daily for three years and, said my friend :—

“ He has only just gained admittance to the house as a suitor ! ”

From the point of view of the English or American woman—let us say the Aryan woman, for that term represents the English-speaking race—the Mexican lady has a poor time. She seldom walks out, and is then usually accompanied by a maid, she hardly ever rides a horse, and to mount a bicycle would be considered positively immoral ! She is pretty and charming, kind and courteous ; but of the joy of sport or games she knows nothing. She wears silk petticoats and Louis XV. shoes ; short skirts and stout boots, with their accompanying emancipation, are unknown to her. She lives the life of the exotic flower, not that of the field daisy.

Talking of women, a Mexican man once said :—

“ I give my wife all the smart frocks she wants, lots of chocolates, and diamonds on her birthday ; what more can any woman desire ? ”

What more ? Great heavens, what less ? The doll, the puppet, the plaything may be contented with chocolates ; but the woman ? No, the capable, thinking, loving woman, who is fit to bring up children, and able to manage a home, who is worthy of the love and respect of a man whose helpmate and companion she ought to be through life—will she be satisfied with chocolates ?

With the men it is quite different. They breed horses and race them, play polo, ride daily, cycle, enjoy the Mexican ball-game or lawn tennis, and even handle a cricket bat. They are more athletic than the over-working Americans, and less so than the under-working English ! Mexican men take much exercise, are therefore often away from home, and of course their wives cannot be with them

as they do not participate in any of their athletic amusements.

The present condition of the women of Mexico is not unlike her position in the England of the eighteenth century. It is barely more than a hundred years since women were first allowed to think for themselves in England.

“A soulless toy for tyrants’ lusts” wrote Byron of the women of the East ; but they knew no better, and the Moor and the Turk are the sons of such women to-day. It is only in England and America that women have found their level. It is the sons of these countries that are now making the history of the world.

A masculine woman is as bad as a feminine man. Each sex has its place, its own appointed duties to fulfil ; yet the strong man is none the worse for being kind and gentle, nor is the kind and gentle woman in any degree lacking in these qualities because she is mentally strong.

Mexican girls never meet men alone, not even when they are engaged ; they marry very young, and live most secluded lives ; one might almost as well enter a convent as be a Mexican lady in a small town, so far as society and amusement are concerned.

Love-making is a very public affair in the country of Cortés’ adoption ; it can be witnessed at any street corner every night. The novios are always there—she on her balcony, or behind her barred window ; he—a wild enthusiastic youth—standing below. With the rich folk marriage is the natural sequence, and all goes well, or ought to.

With the poor folk it is otherwise. Enquiries have lately been set on foot concerning the morality of village life, and the consequent discoveries are positively appalling ! There are pueblos where no wedding has occurred in a generation ! The Government have decided to abolish polygamy, and insist on marriage. They are none too soon in undertaking this delicate task ; the state of

affairs revealed is simply awful! Two hundred miles from the City of Chihuahua a hamlet, San Felizo, was visited, when it was discovered among the twelve families composing the population, there had never been a marriage from the oldest generation to the youngest. Kinship had been disregarded, and the results were terrible. President Diaz has taken up the matter warmly, and, aided by Government and priests, a better condition of things may shortly be looked for.

I need not apologise for the disagreeable things I have to say concerning Mexico. They are not meant to hurt the feelings of many kind friends in that interesting land, but if one sees the good side of life one must necessarily likewise see the bad, and the only useful result is obtained by weighing the two in the balance. Whether my judgment be right or wrong, that judgment is at least honest. This book is an account of "*Mexico as I saw it*," and no one and no consideration has swayed my judgment. I do not possess a single share in railway or mine, I have no interest whatever in Mexico—I wish I had, for commerce promises well—and therefore the opinions expressed in these pages are unbiased, even if they be wrong!

One cannot go very far into Mexico without seeing and hearing a great deal about mining industries, but the subject is so vast it will be treated with trade in a later chapter. There are mines everywhere, chiefly in the hands of Americans and worked by American capital. With railways the case is different, England has found the money and built most of the lines.

The capitalists of the country are certainly Anglo-Saxon, for the most part enterprising young men, who live a rough but healthy life, and are pushing the English-speaking race and its language into the very heart of Mexico.

What will this mean in the future? Will Mexico some day find herself in the position of the Transvaal? Will

she try to impose taxation on all foreigners without representation? If so, it will be a bad day for the land of Montezuma, which will then be overwhelmed by the stronger and wealthier force which even now practically controls the railways and great industries.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW I WAS THE FIRST PASSENGER ON THE NEWEST RAILWAY
IN MEXICO.

IT is always delightful to know one is doing something that no one else has done before, therefore I felt enchanted when asked to go on a final inspection trip with the engineers of a new line ere it was open to the public; in fact, to be the first passenger to Santiago by the newest railway in Mexico.

This railway must become very important in time, for it is the last link but one in a long chain connecting the Mexican International with the Pacific Coast, and shortly after this book is published that final link may be forged to the port of Mazatlan, a distance of something like one hundred miles from Santiago. But those hundred miles cover steep and terrible mountains, the spur of the Rockies, in fact, which has hitherto baffled the skill of engineers. Now, however, all difficulties will be overcome. Mexico is so go-ahead to-day.

Leaving Durango, with its queer, old-world ways, in Mr. Lorenzo Johnson's car "Sabinas," we proceeded to Santiago along the most modern of all railways—a railway so modern, in fact, that it was not opened to the public until a couple of days after our journey. It was quite extraordinary to notice how flat the valleys were between the mountain ranges, allowing the line to run straight and smooth for miles at a time; but a sudden change came



Lampote (wild sunflower), used for fuel.

occasionally, when wonderful engineering skill was exhibited. Along the track, shunted on a siding, we twice passed "work trains," that is to say, entire trains composed of several box cars, in which persons engaged in making the line lived, and were moved about as necessity arose. It is all very ingenious. A bit of line is laid, the work train is run along it until some more of the road is ready, when they follow up. Thus the workmen literally live on the spot, a most important matter in a country where villages lie so far apart. The engineers have a series of tents, and, of course, these camps can be moved as required. Sometimes the line is begun at both ends, to enable the men to meet in the middle; generally the most difficult piece of engineering is attacked first, so that it may be ready by the time the rest is completed.

Small wooden houses, forming a miniature village, met our eyes here and there; these had been put up for the permanent dwellings of the engineers and railway people, but as it was inexpedient, at first, to erect more buildings than were absolutely necessary, no attempt had then been made at a station. A railway truck served the purpose *pro tem.* When once things were a little more advanced, stations would naturally follow, the material for building them being brought from Durango, the nearest town, by means of the railway line itself. Every twenty miles or so we passed one of these strange little settlements of railway folk, with its half-dozen wooden houses, its water-tank for the engines, truck station, and near at hand a siding. Thus we arrived at Chinacates, which up to that time had been the end of the line. A few box cars, and a couple of tents, constituted the terminus!

On the edge of the prairie stood two wondrous old diligences, which formerly ran twenty miles each day to Santiago. Two more journeys, and their life on that route would be ended; in future they were to start from

Santiago to a point still further afield, until again followed up by the railway. The iron horse was chasing the old coach from the road. Once painted bright red, these quaint vehicles were much faded by sun and weather. They hung on enormously thick leather straps instead of springs, and as they moved swung from side to side. There was room for two people beside the driver ; behind him, and on the top, three could sit—beneath a cotton head-covering—whilst inside, nine persons could be stowed away, which must have been a fearfully close pack. Behind went the luggage and bundles. One vehicle was having its brake mended ; the coachman held a block of wood nearly a foot square, and was trimming it to fit the wheel. He seemed to be managing cleverly ; still, everything depended on that brake holding out, for he had a tremendous mountain pass before him.

We alighted from our travelling home at Chinacates, as it had to be detached from the single passenger car, luggage van, and two trucks which composed the mail train from Durango.

That railway terminus was intensely interesting ; what a contrast to Perth in Scotland, or St. Louis in Missouri ! No house of any kind, no proper station, only that van, just a handful of passengers, and bags of silver ore ; nothing else to be seen, save miles and miles of wild prairie, with high mountains towering beyond. The mail train—which I honestly believe did not contain a single letter—waited an hour, and then went back again to Durango, while the few passengers it had carried to Chinacates went off in coaches, or on mules and horses brought from neighbouring haciendas by their friends to meet them. Those who had arrived in like fashion squatted about, intending to travel to Durango in the train, when it was ready for its return journey. In this small way many things begin, but after the lapse of a few years what a difference !

Our shunting was soon over, and back "on board" we went. The first train to pass up and down that splendid gorge, and steam into the little mud-hut town of Santiago, consisted of an engine and the private car "Sabinas." It was truly a novel experience. We rose a thousand feet during the twenty-mile run—a steep incline and a decline with wondrous curves. It was amazing to find how smoothly we travelled, and we actually accomplished twenty miles in fifty-seven minutes! This, as previously remarked, was a new line, barely finished, with considerable grades and turns round the mountain's sides, and yet we did the twenty miles in less than an hour! Some railway lines in England that have been in use for a half a century ought to be put to shame by such a feat.

We passed wonderful flocks of birds, not hundreds or thousands, but tens of thousands. They looked like black patches in the fields, and rose like sable clouds into the air. The effect was strange, and although I have seen great flights of birds and locusts in Morocco, I never saw anything resembling those in Mexico.

Another matter that arrested my attention was the fact that platforms were erected in corn-fields. These were six feet square, light and primitive, rising some eight feet above the ground, or about two feet higher than the Indian corn when fully grown. Men stand on them at hours of the day when crows, blackbirds, or wild geese congregate, and with a sling about a yard long, which they twist round and round, fling a stone with a crack like a pistol shot. Sometimes they actually kill the bird, at other times merely frighten it away. One end of the sling is securely fixed to the man's thumb or wrist, the other he holds loosely; at the end is a bit of leather with a hole in the middle for the stone to rest on. As the man swings the missile over his head with two or three whirls, he releases the loose end, and away flies the stone with no uncertain aim.

The Mexican Indian is kind to all animals, with the exception of his beasts of burden. He pets his cats and dogs, and lets them sleep on his bed by day or night ; but he kicks and punches, and even sticks nails into his mules to make them go. He loads up poor little donkeys until they can hardly move, and when they fall by the way he kicks and beats them until they stagger up again. But, unlike the Moor whom he so much resembles in this respect, he does not himself ride on the top of the load, and, indeed, rarely mounts a pack animal. When riding on his ordinary pacing steed the Mexican, like the Icelander, claps his legs all the time ; he rides thus for hours, perpetually striking the animal's sides as a means of persuading it to go on. The natives often ride pillion fashion—two grown men on one small donkey being quite a common sight.

Along the line from Durango to Santiago, then barely in working order, it was interesting to see the beginning of a new track. It really was a beautiful bit of scenery we beheld while we turned and twisted in the cañon, passed through cuttings, or crossed the Santiago river ; but to me, not being an engineer, and a novice with regard to sleepers and ties, frogs and ballast, and other queer words endlessly in the mouths of railway men, the most curious things were the old castles, the quaint ruins, or sort of Irish towers, which, after all, were nothing of the kind, being merely extraordinary rock formations in the hills themselves.

It seemed very lovely to be doing something for the first time ; who knows but our little trip might lead to great developments ? There are mines and undiscovered ores in these mountains ; there is timber on the hills—and timber is of great value in Mexico—indeed, there are great possibilities throughout that wonderful country, and the funny little ill-paved adobe-built huts of Santiago may some day turn into a prosperous township.

It may be well here to explain what adobe houses, so uni-

versal in Mexico, really are. Adobe forts, raised by Aztecs two or three thousand years ago, are standing to-day.

Unlike the bricks in biblical days, there is no straw in an adobe, which we often saw being made. Two or three men would be at work together ; they dug out the clayey soil, mixed it with water, put it into wooden moulds, which generally held four at a time, and left the muddy compounds to dry in the sun, when they turned them over to dry the other side. When quite firm, these strange brown earth bricks, about $6 \times 12 \times 18$ inches, were ready for building purposes. Adobes are native products, and the haciendas throughout Mexico are built of them.

Sometimes the engineers have strange experiences when constructing lines in those wild districts. Not long before our visit a poor fellow met with a sad fate. He went off cheerily one fine morning with his gun, in pursuit of game. He did not return for supper as arranged, so the next day his friends set out in search of him, but two days elapsed before they found his body on the mountain side. He had been stabbed in the back, otherwise there were no signs of violence. Presumably he had been killed for the sake of his gun and a few valuables. Some fiend had doubtless taken his life simply for that handful of spoil.

On we puffed. Mr. Rankin Johnson, the chief engineer of the line, a nephew of my host, with a couple of engineers had started an hour earlier, preceding us on a hand-car—not for our safety, but simply because they wanted to examine some culverts—and having come out to Chinacates in our car, they began their inspection on their own account, so that later we might bring them back from Santiago to Durango. Half-way along the line we overtook the party. In order to let us pass, they and their four peons alighted, lifted the whole affair bodily off the track, and directly our engine and car had gone by, they put it back on to the line and resumed their journey behind us.

I once had a narrow escape on a hand or trolley car which, as it had nothing to do with the International Line, I may relate.

Engineers and road-keepers are continually travelling up and down the line, since on every railway track in the world some daily repairs are, or should be, in progress. It is not always practicable to utilize a train, or even an engine, to get to the spot where they wish to make their investigation, therefore they use a hand-car. This, as the word implies, is worked by hand. It is on four small wheels, which run along the track, and usually has a sort of plank seat in front for the "boss," as our Yankee friends would say. There is always just enough danger about such a ride to render it exciting, but it is a form of locomotion hardly suitable for anyone suffering from "nerves," especially on such a downward grade as a "four per cent.," where the men standing behind have to apply the brake with all their strength, to prevent the car from running away.

On the occasion in question we were going down a steep cañon, and the peons were working hard to prevent our speed becoming break-neck. We had just crossed a bridge —one of those bridges without any rails at the side to keep one from falling over, merely sleepers laid across supports between the spaces of which we saw the water flowing below. It was fortunate we had passed this point.

Suddenly an engineer seized me by the neck, and we fell together, on the edge of the precipice. It was a bad spot to fall, but dazed though I was, I realised it was better to be upset thus ignominiously than to be smashed to atoms, as our car immediately was, by an engine which had come down upon us. It was a miraculous escape ; the iron wheels of our car flew to either side, while the wood cracked up into a thousand splinters. It all happened in a second, but oh, what an experience !

Ears accustomed to such sounds had heard the engine

of a freight train when turning one of those sharp corners. The peons jumped off, and my friend dragged me along with him, thus saving my life, for in ignorance of danger I should have sat there chatting till death tore down upon me from behind.

Engines and freight cars had been in and out of Santiago for a week or two, but such a thing as a proper Pullman had never before been seen by the inhabitants. Their amazement was delightful to witness. As our engine steamed in front of the town, the people began to assemble to look at what was still such a novelty, when they discovered something strange in shape and form was following the engine. Young people fetched out their fathers and mothers, the fathers and mothers unearthed the aged, even the blind, and gradually the entire population of the little township gathered together to see a Pullman Car and an Englishwoman! It would be hard to say which created the greater excitement, the white woman who came from over the sea, and wore a hat, or the car which had real rooms in it, beds, a kitchen and a fire! Never, never had anything so extraordinary been dreamt of, and they simply stood round open-mouthed and paralyzed with surprise.

It appears that when the first engine arrived with some freight cars, the natives were terribly alarmed, so experts carefully explained to them how the machinery and the steam made the engine pull the cars along. This pacified them ; they had feared it was something uncanny, which foreboded evil. One day, however, an engine backed, when terrible was the consternation of the populace. Nothing had been said about that, and they thought it must be a device of the devil himself! Panic reigned for a time, for those uneducated folk are terribly superstitious.

When we pulled up at Santiago, a miniature Jerusalem lay before us. One-storeyed, flat-roofed, windowless, mud-brick houses, huge prickly pears and cactus, long-haired

pigs, women with shawls over their heads, generally bare-footed, or—if richer—wearing sandals of leather, all these met our view. Scenes reminding one of Bible history met the eye on every side, even the grinding of corn between stones.

Santiago intends to grow big ; it has already started a *plaza*, or public garden, and even put up a band-stand, a strange anomaly amidst so much that is primitive. Pigs and chickens were running about the ill-paved, cobbled streets, and live at night in a room occupied by a whole family. The door of the house is shut, there is no window or ventilator of any kind, and darkness and general stuffiness, added to the odour of pigs and chickens, prevail.

Oil lamps occasionally swing across a street from ropes, but only where four roads meet. Women—and quite young women too—stand at their doors smoking.

From twelve noon to three o'clock is the hour of rest. Even the church door is locked—an almost unknown event in a Catholic country. Priests are not allowed to dress in their clerical robes in the land of Montezuma, so, as a sort of compromise, they wear black tall hats! Even in the wilds of the country, far away from the haunts of civilisation, one meets the curious spectacle of a top hat, worn with a black Spanish cloak. Such top hats they are, too! They would do credit to Ally Sloper.

In the middle of the town was the “ball wall”; every village has this. Ball is a great Mexican game; it resembles tennis—not lawn tennis—except that it is played with the hand instead of with a racquet, and the wall and sides are not nearly so large as in a racquet court.

Santiago, a mighty queer old spot, untouched by civilisation, is still real primitive old-world Mexico. Half-a-dozen engineers, a handful of engine-drivers, and a few miners were the only white people who, up to that day, had set foot in the place. Yet it had its music-stand and its fine

old church ; its public gardens and its promenade. The poorer women wore their *reboso*, or head shawl, and the richer their lace mantillas—until my arrival a woman in a hat had never been seen.

When we returned to our car we found an admiring crowd still standing round, engaged busily examining it, and when we left the town the crowd ran alongside the rails with us for at least half a mile, the men wildly waving their hats and yelling ; but whether they were most interested in the sight of an Englishwoman or a Pullman Car, will ever remain a mystery.

A couple of days later we reached Torreon ; it was ten o'clock, and my train for Mexico City—a twenty-nine hours' run—was timed to leave at 7.30 the next morning. I was to bid good-bye to the delightful car which had been my home for a week, and which finally conveyed me to the frontier when I left Mexico, six months later.

Letters for Mr. Lorenzo Johnson and business telegrams were brought "on board," and an enquiry made as to whether anyone of the name of Tweedie was on the car.

"Yes!"

"Two Federal telegrams arrived yesterday for that name, and no one has claimed them."

My heart jumped ; the only person who knew I might pass through Torreon was the British Consul at Mexico City, who kindly allowed my letters to be addressed to his house ; no local telegrams could have discovered my whereabouts. "Two Federal telegrams" sounded most alarming. Had anything gone wrong in England, and did those messages contain a summons home, sent on from the Consulate ? I felt literally sick with apprehension, and things did not improve when it transpired that no telegrams could possibly be unearthed that night. The office closed at eight o'clock, the man with the keys was not to be found, and no information could be obtained before

eight next morning, while my southern train was to leave at 7.30! What was to be done?

The only train in the day must not be missed for caprice, and yet to go further south when I might be wanted north, on my way back to England, seemed impossible.

What a night of misery I endured! Even the comfortable bed in the Sabinas had lost its charm, and with each succeeding hour things looked blacker and blacker. Something must be done at dawn, or I felt I should go mad. So much might have happened nearly six thousand miles away in London since my last letters! "Two telegrams" rang through and through my brain! *One* might not have meant much, but two seemed more important, especially when ascertaining my whereabouts must have caused great thought and trouble. It was horrible!

At early dawn my kind host was up and away, and I waited and waited, watching the streaks of day break into the sky before the sun rose at six o'clock. He returned an hour later. He had found the Federal Office and Clerk, had appealed to the Spanish gentleman on behalf of the English lady, had looked through a whole pile of telegrams, but found none for me.

"It was probably a mistake," said he; "most likely the official had got confused in some way over the English name," and accordingly, somewhat consoled, I left for Mexico City, Mr. Johnson promising to continue the search, and wire to me along the line. A few hours later I heard "nothing had turned up," so a sleepless night, hours of horrible suspense and anxiety, were all the outcome of some stupid blunder; still, even twelve hours of worry and uncertainty were a cheap price to pay for escaping what might have been a tangible sorrow.

It was a sad moment when I bade good-bye to the Sabinas and my kind host, Mr. Lorenzo Johnson, who had made my trip on a private car as delightful as instructive.



A Mexican well.



Grass coat made from cactus.

By way of comfort, he gave me a stick of sugar-cane at parting, and I found the watery sweet not at all bad.

Sucking sugar-cane is a great Indian habit; the peasants of Mexico suck cane more than the natives of the United States chew gum, and that is saying a good deal! A man will buy two or three long sticks of cane, perhaps eight feet in length, and after peeling off the outside, will cut bit after bit, and chew it all day. Perhaps it is a good preventive of thirst.

Mexico must surely be the most dusty country in the world. From New Orleans to Mexico City the train passes through two thousand miles of dust! Texas is terribly dusty, but Mexico is worse. Yet away from the railways, which naturally run through flat valleys, there are some of the most beautifully vegetated spots on earth.

Between Torreon and Mexico City we crossed the tropic of Cancer, through which most of the line runs at an elevation of from five to eight thousand feet above the sea level; the vegetation became more tropical hour by hour. Yet strawberries are to be found all the year round in Central Mexico.

We passed numerous peasants clad in coats made from the grass of the palm cactus. They are really very quaint, just a series of spikes from which the rain easily drips away; they are cheap and warm, and do not take long to fashion. The native Mexican makes coats, baskets, combs, anything and everything, out of his palm cactus or maguey plant, just as the Finlander makes the same things, including his shoes, out of birch bark!

It was pouring with rain, on a horribly windy cold night, when I first entered Mexico City, and to add to the misery of it all I had a large part of my luggage stolen—where and how shall not be stated—suffice it to say it was never recovered. A man arriving in London or Paris without his dress clothes, or even a frock coat, would feel a

little unhappy ; what about a woman, then, who had lost her best silk dresses, and all her gloves, and was about to make her bow in the Paris of the Western Hemisphere !

As my trip to Santiago was made on the latest railway in Mexico, a description of the first line seems appropriate here.

I had the pleasure of meeting the engineer who laid the first railway in Montezuma's land ; his account of the struggles for its accomplishment was somewhat strange. Major Robert Gorsuch, an American by birth, was sent for to Mexico, and after successfully performing several engineering feats, had the honour of opening the first railway on July 4th, 1857.

"Our little line ran from the city to the village of Guadalupe," he told me ; "it was a bold experiment, and one which led to the opening up of modern Mexico."

An engine was made at great expense in Philadelphia, and out of compliment to the country's Patron Saint a large copper plate was fixed on either side of the *cab*, on which the Virgin of Guadalupe was painted. All devout Indians felt kindly disposed towards the new invention in consequence of this dedication.

After being made in the States, the engine and railway cars were all taken to pieces, packed in boxes, sent by sea, to Vera Cruz, and then travelled between two and three hundred miles over the mountains by the old Puebla roads to Mexico City. These mountain passes are in places 11,000 feet high, and dreadful were the experiences of those engaged in getting the heavy engine across those rugged paths. Every waggon had a team of twenty-two mules ; but whenever the way was muddy, the road bad, or the ascent particularly steep, two and sometimes three teams had to be harnessed together in order to get along at all, for each waggon contained 12,500 lbs. of iron ! Imagine sixty-six mules dragging one waggon up a hill, and even then experiencing difficulty in making progress !

At last everything arrived—the locomotive and four cars from the United States, the rails and fastenings from England. Major Gorsuch managed to construct his little line in spite of the revolutionary condition of the country, at a time when no one knew to-day if he would live to see the morrow.

The excitement was tremendous ; only a few people in Mexico had ever seen a train. The President and all the high officials of the Federal and Municipal Government, the Archbishop and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, mustered in full force. A religious ceremony prefaced the proceedings, and 100,000 people assembled, riding or walking in from miles around.

For weeks and months men arrived from the surrounding haciendas (ranches)—sometimes a distance of hundreds of miles—in order to try the speed of their favourite horses against that of the steam engine. They would bet—no Mexican can ever do anything without betting on the result—but alas ! the engine always won, although for fun the engine-drivers would often give the horsemen a start, and only open the throttle and dash off just in time to reach the goal ahead of their rivals.

“ The iron horse,” said Major Gorsuch, “ with his lungs of fire and sinews of steel, always won.”

The people used to ride backwards and forwards in the cars for excitement ; when their money was exhausted they pawned a shirt or a belt in order to have another ride. They clambered on to the roof, and it was with the greatest difficulty they were kept from being killed. Even to-day trouble arises when new lines are opened. Although the modern Indian may have heard of a railway train, he seldom knows what it really is, as I am aware from the excitement caused by the first sight of one at Santiago.

CHAPTER VII.

CELEBRATION OF THE GREAT SAINT OF GUADALUPE.

THE Guadalupe Festival is far more famous in Mexico than even a pilgrimage to Lourdes in Europe. At modern Lourdes one beholds a strange and wonderful spectacle, people weak in body, yet strong in faith ; but for weird splendour and picturesque devotion we give the palm to ancient Guadalupe. What a scene it was !

It is well known how at Lourdes, in 1858, the Virgin appeared to a young girl named Bernadette, and after promising the girl happiness in this world, as well as in that to come, bade her ask the priests to build a church near the spring, where the sick should be healed. Several times the Virgin appeared to Bernadette, and from that day Lourdes became famous.

In the origin of the apparition, and in many other ways, the story of Lourdes strangely resembles that of Guadalupe, where three hundred and twenty-seven years prior to the appearance at Lourdes, the Mexican miracle was vouchsafed. The story which originated those remarkable pilgrimages, held to the present day, is pretty and romantic.

Guadalupe, only a few miles from the city of Mexico, was formerly a great Aztec stronghold. Up to the time of the miracle the country had been Pagan ; the Aztecs practised human sacrifice ; Malintzi, the saviour of the people, had still to come, but after Juan Diego saw the



Virgin of Guadalupe, patron saint of Mexico, as she appeared miraculously on the Indian's Tilma, 1531. Now above altar.

Virgin, all was changed. An excellent account of the apparition was written by Fray Augustin de Vetancourt in 1672.

Juan Diego was a peasant, living in Tolpetlac. One Sunday morning (December 9th, 1531) his attention was attracted by the sound of singing. As he approached the hill of Tepeyácac—now called Guadalupe—he felt the singing could be no other than that of angels. He stood spellbound; the music fascinated him; the longer he listened the more it seemed to penetrate his soul. It was like nothing he had ever heard before, so tenderly sweet, so wonderfully grand, that he hardly dared glance at the mountain to see whence it came. At last, raising his eyes to the rocks above him, he beheld a lovely vision, just such a vision as appeared three centuries later to Bernadette. He fell upon his knees, when the lady, encircled by a halo of light, in gentle tones bade him tell the Bishop it was her wish a great temple should be built upon that hill in her honour. He knelt for a time in terrified amaze, and when he again ventured to look up, the vision had vanished.

The Bishop, Don Juan Zumárraga, an Indian of some repute, was incredulous when he heard Juan Diego's story, and although he listened patiently to what the man had to say, told him he must have corroborative proof before considering the matter. Poor Juan went away disconsolate, and returning to the hill, waited, hoping against hope for the lady's reappearance, in order that he might tell her how fruitless had been his mission. To his surprise he suddenly saw her standing in front of a rock, watching for his return. She looked more beautiful than ever, and instead of being angry at the Bishop's incredulity, vanished as before after bidding the Indian return.

The following Sunday, as desired, Juan repaired once more to the hillside, when he again beheld the vision. Again she bade him tell the Bishop her command that a

temple should be erected on the hill. Poor Juan returned to the great potentate, and repeated what he had seen and heard, but the Bishop, still unconvinced, refused to take any steps in the matter unless proof of her supernatural power were forthcoming. The Indian departed crestfallen. The Bishop's curiosity having been aroused, however, he sent a couple of servants—so runs the legend—to follow Juan Diego, and see what actually happened. The peons started eagerly on their mission, and all went well until they reached the hill now known as Guadalupe, when suddenly the man they had been sent to watch miraculously disappeared from view.

The Indian, however, though invisible to those who followed him, soon found audience of the Lady of Guadalupe, and told her the Bishop demanded evidence of her appearance. She would not give it, and Juan was leaving her, disconsolate, when she bade him return on the morrow, when proof should be forthcoming.

Juan, in a state of feverish excitement at the great and marvellous vision which had been vouchsafed to him, went home, expecting strange things next day. Unfortunately he found that his uncle, Juan Bernadino, had been taken very ill with the fever known to Indians as *cocolixtli*. The stricken man was so much worse the next day Juan dared not leave him. The sickness increased, and the following morning, death seeming imminent, the Indian hurried off to summon a confessor. He was afraid to pass the spot where the Virgin had appeared, so he sought another path on the eastern side of the mountain. As he passed the hill, however, lo! he saw the lady coming towards him, and heard her sweet voice calling. He told her of his uncle's illness and approaching death, but instantly all his anxiety was dispelled, for she assured him his uncle was "quite well again."

Once more he knelt before her amazed, and she bade him cut her some flowers. Till that moment flowers had

never grown on the barren hill, but, to the Indian's astonishment, he instantly saw them blooming all around. He picked a quantity, which she requested him to take to the Bishop at once as her sign. Till he had done so, no other eyes were to look upon her offering; therefore, to ensure this, he wrapped his fragrant treasures in the blanket, or "tilma," which every Indian wears, and set off once more for the Bishop's palace. When Juan unfolded his tilma before the ecclesiastic, upon the cloth was imprinted the face of the Virgin!

That picture exists to-day, carefully guarded in the Cathedral at Guadalupe. The Patron Saint is depicted in a blue robe, with a skirt of a soft pink shade; the colours are subdued yet warm. She has a halo all round her.

By February, 1532, a temple had, as directed, been built upon the spot, and Juan Diego and his uncle Bernadino became the servants of the Virgin.

This is the story so loved by Indian pilgrims when they gather together in thousands every year to do honour to their Patron Saint.

The Church of Rome gave permission for these festivals, and in 1754 a Papal Bull officially instituted and sanctioned the 12th of December as the feast day of the "Patron Saint of Mexico, the famous Lady of Guadalupe."

And now to turn to the celebration itself. For days before the festival Indians arrive by train, though most of the pilgrims come on foot. Many of them have to cover hundreds of miles, and often carry all their worldly belongings with them.

It is a strange and weird sight. Here, a beggar maid, accompanied by a little girl, both fragile and delicate-looking, who have tramped on day by day to pray at the famous shrine. There an old Indian, with wrinkled brows, leads a child by the hand, while he himself is bent nearly double by the weight upon his back. He carries blankets, the tiny

basin in which to light his fire, a few pots and pans, some sugar-cane to chew, and a roll of matting or canvas which will be supported later on sticks, to make a sort of umbrella-like covering for his family. His squaw in rags and tatters follows behind, a baby of nine or ten months old hanging in a shawl upon her back. Its little blue-black head reaches her shoulders, and its small feet appear below the blue rebozo (shawl), in which it seems to be sitting. They all look awfully, hopelessly poor ; the wind is cold—as it so often is during December in Mexico City—nevertheless, these people only wear calico, and even that thin covering is torn and tattered. Watch them, however ! They go up to a little booth before the church door and buy a couple of candles, one for the man and one for the woman. They do not even pause to rest or deposit their bundles in their haste to reach the shrine. They enter the lower church—for there are two as at Lourdes—and after dipping their fingers in the holy water and crossing themselves—particularly on the face, which seems to be an Indian characteristic—they proceed to crawl on their knees up the aisle to the altar rails. They are only doing what hundreds and thousands of their fellows are doing, what, in fact, is expected of them at the Fête of Guadalupe.

What a curious spectacle it was ! We went out to the shrine a couple of days previously to see the bulk of the Indians arriving. Such scenes as the above were being enacted every moment. Hundreds were already on the spot, some sleeping curled up in gutters ; others dressing their hair, or otherwise employed with the zoology of their raven locks. More were gambling.

The whole scene was a strange anomaly. Outside the church were a dozen booths, containing gambling tables, where youth and age were betting their halfpence or their dollars. Gambling seems born in the Mexican, whether he be of Indian or of Spanish descent. It appears as essential

to him as his dinner, more so in fact. But what a fearful thing it is—what a curse to mankind ! Look at those people's faces ; see that boy gathering up his silver coins to go and get drunk on pulque. He has won more dollars in a few minutes than he ever saw in all his life before, and his newly-acquired wealth will be his ruin. See that old woman's shaky hand as she takes her cigar from her mouth and watches the roulette ball spin round and round ; her last cents staked on the chance. Look at those two small children, who, instead of spending the few centavos given them for sugar-cane, are risking them on this game of hazard. The same anxiety, the same nervousness, is noticeable among these poor Indians that one sees in the bejewelled gamblers at Monte Carlo ; but of the two, this seemed the more horrible, for these folk had come on a pilgrimage to Heaven, yet turned aside enticed by Hell !

There were booths everywhere ; queer pottery, coloured handkerchiefs, fruits or dried meat, baskets, candles for the shrines, even bottles of sacred water, just as at Lourdes, and pilgrims purchase pictures of the Virgin to decorate their huts, or to hang above the sacred altar in their humble dwellings.

They have wonderful faith. The only thing they love and dread is their religion. They are powerless in the hands of the priests, who rule them completely by fear.

The most interesting part of the festival was undoubtedly the night before the chief ceremony. When we reached the Zocalo or Plaza Mayor in Mexico City about half-past six, it was to find every tram to Guadalupe crammed to overflowing. Some of the pilgrims, who had arrived late, were expending their few cents in an electric tram-ride out to the famous shrine. After walking hundreds of miles with shoeless feet, the Indian availed himself of the advantages of modernity, and completed his journey in an electric carriage. Yet another of the vagaries of Mexico.

Not being able to procure seats in a tram, we hired a

“special car,” which was fastened on behind those already made up in train form. It was really a wonderful sight to see hundreds of people trudging along the road on foot to the Guadalupe festival; rows and rows of carts of every shape and form, all heavily laden, crawled along in solemn procession. A number of burros (donkeys) were ridden, in many cases pillion fashion, by the more wealthy folk. On the left-hand side was a series of shrines where the pilgrims stopped to pray. In many respects that procession of humanity reminded me of the crowd arriving at Oberammergau to see the Passion Play.

After half-an-hour’s run we reached Guadalupe, to find the streets positively alive with humanity. It was a perfectly dark night, and the lights from Indian fires shed strange shadows and illuminations on the scene. Many groups were seated round small earthenware pots, about the size of a soup-plate, in which a few knobs of charcoal were burning. One of the party was wont to kindle the tiny flame with a fan made of plaited grass. When it was properly ignited, she would put her flat tin on the top, and warm tortillas for the evening meal. By way of extra luxury a little honey was spread over the tortilla, or a few scraps of goat meat rolled inside with a chilli. The Indians had the quaintest way of illuminating the scene; three sticks, a couple of feet long, were made into a standing tripod, on the top of which a stone, brick, or piece of tin was placed, on which lay loosely a few shreds of wood which, when ignited, made a brilliant blaze.

The Indians were sitting around on their heels, sometimes cross-legged like the Arabs, but always in what appeared uncomfortable positions. The weird flames of light, the colouring of the serapes, the white cotton shirts, and the dark skins of the people, made a strange and wonderful picture.

In front of the basilica was a blaze of light, all the

more strange in the general gloom. The towers of the church were illuminated from inside with Bengal lights, coloured red, white, and green, to represent the flag of Mexico. It all added effect to a remarkable scene, for the towers of flame rose high in the air, with the darkness of night for a background, and below was that queer medley of humanity with its small bonfires, and funny little trestled lights.

At 7 30 the service in the church was to commence ; the fires were extinguished a few minutes before that hour, bags and bundles collected, and into the sacred edifice the greater portion of the assembly proceeded.

Mexican Indians are most terrible thieves ; such thieves, in fact, that they actually steal amongst themselves, and thus it is that every man, woman and child had to convey into the church all their worldly belongings. These generally consisted of a blanket, sombrero, little wooden tripod for the fire, perhaps a couple of pots, and possibly a handkerchief in which tortillas were tied in a bundle. Not only did they take all their worldly goods and chattels to the service, but their dogs, or an occasional parrot accompanied them, and that matins was certainly one of the strangest and most weird services that could be imagined.

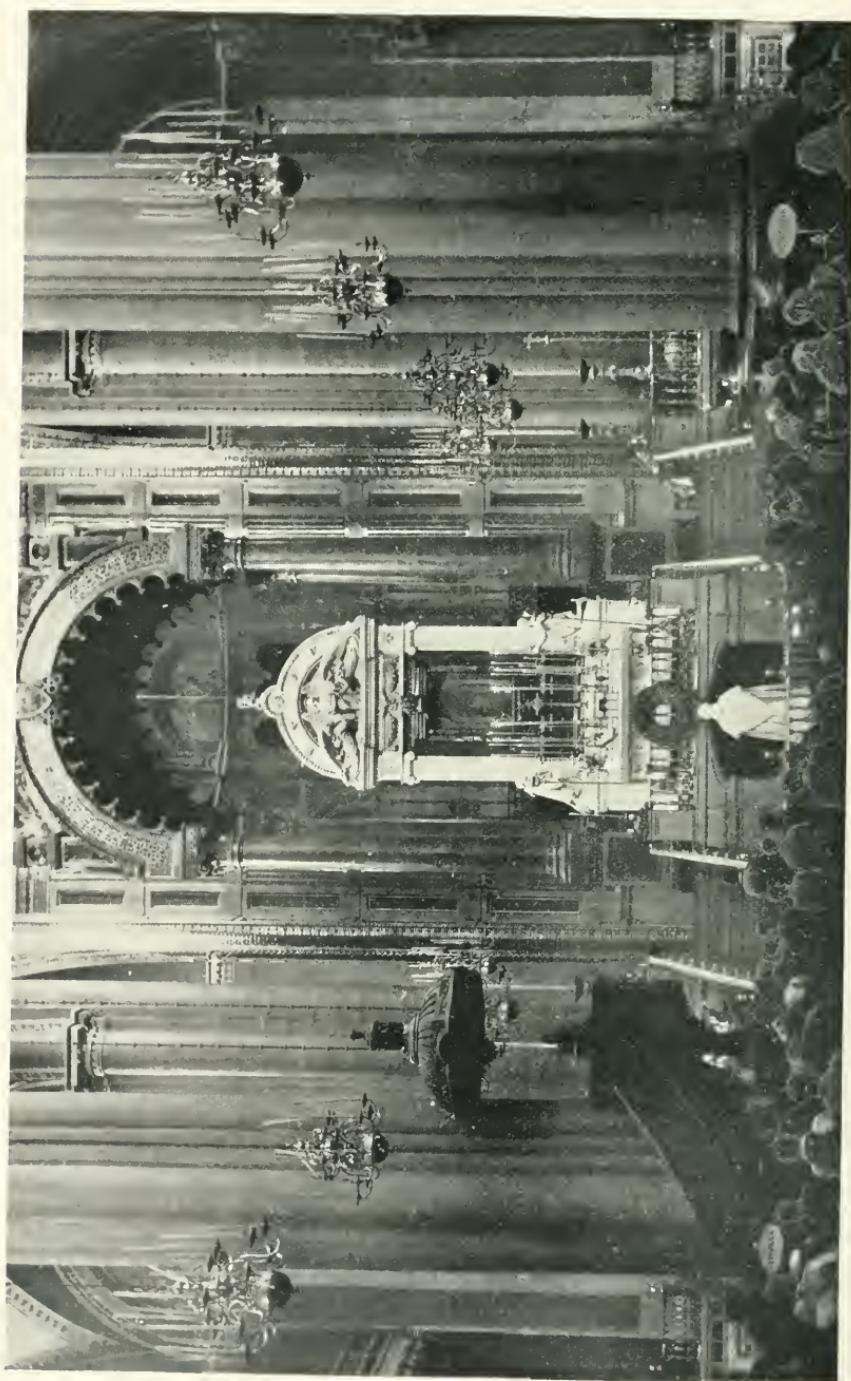
The Cathedral is a handsome edifice. It represents wealth and splendour. The massive balustrades are of solid silver ; the candelabra hanging from the ceiling are beautiful, and on this occasion some thousands of candles shed a lurid glow on all around. The priests in gorgeous robes, the decorations of flowers and palms, the quantities of incense giving cloud-like mysticism to the scene, told of wealth unbounded, while kneeling upon the stone flags in various stages of poverty and abject rags were the Indians. Oh, how poor they were !

We noticed that these people invariably laid their hats upon the stones, and the brim being eight or ten inches wide, they knelt upon that, evidently preferring the soft

plaited straw or felt to the hard flags. Many of them took their bundles off their backs, and calmly placed them in front, settled their dog beside them, and having prepared for their comfort during the service, proceeded to cross themselves, and begin their devotions.

It was certainly a wonderful sight ; the enthusiasm of these people was extraordinary. Rags and religion were on every side. Some folk said their prayers with their arms outstretched, evidently an extra penance. Others crept up to the chief altar upon their hands and knees. But the absorption and reverence of all was marvellous. Amongst them were some wonderful types of Indians—exactly the class one sees in picture books—dark of skin, fine of profile, and yet with a sort of wicked devilment about them that denoted ill. Many of the women wore the old Indian dress consisting of two articles, a sort of scarf used for a petticoat wrapt round the body, and tied in a knot at the side, leaving an opening through which the limbs could be seen, and a square kind of cloth with a hole in the middle (called gaban or jorongo) through which they pass the head. This body covering, closely resembling a towel, simply hangs down before and behind, leaving the arms bare, and as it is not fastened in at the waist, the body can usually be seen. It was hardly a sufficient covering for a cold night ! Yet these poor tatters are all the people possess.

Tied in a bundle on her back, every woman present had a baby. The number of babies at Guadalupe seemed extraordinary. Every female, whatever her age, appeared to have one slung on before or hung on behind her, and, as if that were not enough to carry for numbers of miles, she generally had bundles two or three times the size of the child added to her burden. Of course, the infants cried ; as an accompaniment to the music there arose a constant wail from babyhood in Church.



Interior of Guadalupe Church, showing the altar above which is framed the famous Tilma, depicting the Virgin of Guadalupe. The white priest below is in marble : balustrades of solid silver. Pilgrims in front.

The death rate among these children is exceedingly high, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, but that is not a thing the Mexican Indian much regrets, for he believes that if a child die in its infancy it goes straight to Heaven, and therefore he (the father) is free from all responsibility ; whereas, if it live to grow up, and then do anything wrong, he, as the parent, is to blame. Therefore, apparently, they have a way of looking upon infant mortality as a sort of blessing, and more than half of these wretched children die in their youth to become angels. When a child expires the friends are invited to come and see the baby angel, and great are the rejoicings. So little do they value child life that it is no uncommon thing to see a woman go marketing with a few bundles in one arm, and a baby's coffin in the other. It is dead ! God rest its soul ! and there the matter ends.

In the Church, however, the members of the congregation were moved to the depths of their souls by the music, light, grandeur and comfort of their religion. Never have we seen such devotion, such utter abandonment of self, such awe-inspired adoration. One looked and marvelled.

After the service was over, the Church soon emptied. With solemn pomp a little blind was dropped over the famous picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, on which miraculous painting, but a moment previously, the glow of innumerable candles had fallen. The crown of jewels ceased to shine and sparkle ; the solemn chants of the priests were hushed ; the faithful knelt no longer on the bare stone flags. Night had spread her ebon wings.

In former days, paintings representing this Virgin depicted her wearing a diadem, but the later reproductions denote the famous impression on the "tilma" as crownless. And thus it came about, when the Church was restored a few years ago, that the ladies of Mexico subscribed large sums in money and jewels to have a real crown made to hang above

the picture in the Church, and on such famous days as the Feast of Guadalupe, the jewelled diadem hangs above the sacred tilma itself. The picture thereon has been the subject of much discussion. Artists have examined it, but no one apparently knows whether the miraculous Virgin is painted, if so what pigments were used, or how applied. It remains a mystery.

The service over, boys with high double steps went from candelabra to candelabra to put out the lights, while another individual rattled a huge bunch of keys as he walked behind the outgoing multitude to hurry them from the edifice. We stayed behind until the place was clear, so that probably ten minutes elapsed between the exit of the first individual and our own departure. What a scene presented itself as we left the Church door!

Thousands and thousands of Indians had already sought their rest, but not on spring mattresses or feather beds! They were simply lying about in a heterogeneous mass. Men, women, children, dogs, bundles, hats—all mixed and huddled together. They spread over the stone flags all round the church, in the great open square, in the market hall, up the steps leading to the higher Church, and around the sacred wall. Many of them had not even a blanket, but just lay huddled upon the ground like round balls, and were apparently asleep in a few moments. Others, possessed of "sarapes" or blankets, rolled their head completely up in the same, and then settled down for the night, leaving their bodies from the waist downwards—their legs, ankles and feet bare—entirely exposed, evidently thinking that if their heads were covered they would be quite comfortable. The Indian, like the ostrich, buries his head and is content; there was not an inch to spare between these people, and yet we saw a man, who had obviously been forgotten when the rest of the family settled down to sleep, coming with a dim light in his hand to look

for his friends. Suddenly he recognised them by a shawl or bundle, and stepping over fifty slumbering mortals, managed to get his foot squeezed into a little space near his party; gradually he pushed them aside, finally settled down, and to our amazement wriggled himself in, until when we left him, he was comfortably asleep on a spot where we thought there was no room for even a fly to gain admittance. No doubt this mode of procedure keeps them warm, and hence its origin; but it was a curious spectacle. It seemed as if an ordinary Indian about five feet high could sleep in a space two feet square. He doubles his knees under his nose, rolls himself into a bundle something like a sleeping dog, and as he is in close proximity to his neighbour, we presume he does not kick, or some one would inevitably be hurt.

Men lingered long around the gambling booths. They had just come out of the Church, their rosaries were hardly back in their pockets, the holy water was barely dry upon their temples, but vice awaited them. The lights attracted, the clink of the dice enticed, and straight from their knees and their prayers they went off to gamble and play at games of chance. It seemed horrible. Those who won departed to buy strong drink, and when intoxicated returned to play again. Those who lost went to the pawn shop to pledge their hat or blanket, returning to again resume their flirt with fortune.

Gradually the lights were extinguished one by one, the murmur of voices ceased, the darkness of night enveloped the scene, a chilliness filled the air, and utter silence reigned.

The next morning we struggled back to Guadalupe by nine o'clock, at which hour the chief mass began, but as more pilgrims had been coming in all through the night, the thousands already assembled were augmented by many thousands more, and the struggle we had to get into the

church was terrible ; yet women with babies tied to their backs managed to squeeze through that dense crowd ; the babies screamed, the dogs yelped, but still the Mexican-Indian pushed his way in, until an enormous concourse filled every available inch of the building. It seemed as if we might all be burnt to death, for every single person carried a lighted candle. No matter how poor, the Indian feels it his duty to buy a candle as an offering to the Sacred Lady of Guadalupe. The grease was dropping in every direction. Some of the pilgrims were kneeling, others were standing, but whichever position they squeezed into, thus they had to remain, as there was neither room to get down on to their knees, or to rise from them until the mass was ended. This was the first of a series of services which lasted all through the day. By these repeated masses the Indians—said to number fifteen 'or twenty thousand—were all able to attend worship within the sacred edifice, and pay their homage to the patron saint of Mexico.

Although profoundly religious in the church itself, the outside element inclined to be rowdy ; among other things some hundred boys, no doubt of Indian extraction but chiefly from the town, dressed up in queer paint and ancient feathers, were dancing for centavos. They sang a curious dirge which harmonised well with the religious element ; but otherwise a somewhat theatrical effect was produced which, like the round-abouts, spoiled the sacred nature of the proceedings.

At the back of the principal church is a strange stairway, leading to the Chapel on the Hill (Capilla del Cerrito). This ascent is composed of very wide stone steps, of which there are some hundreds, that conduct from the Chapel of the Well containing the sacred water, at the bottom of the hill, to the small church on the top. It is up these steps devout pilgrims crawl on their hands and knees. There are several little shrines in



Guadalupe pilgrims returning from the Upper Church. Walls crooked from earthquakes.



Modern Indians in old Indian dress.

the walls ; but the most curious object of all is the monument known as the Stone Sails. That sails should be composed of stone is indeed a paradox ; but such is the case. They stand about 30 or 40 feet high, and are really three sails—one on the top of the other—carved in solid stone. They are not particularly picturesque, but the position in which they are placed is so prominent that they can be seen for miles around. The story of these sails, which were a votive offering, is as follows :—

Some sailors, who were overtaken by a terrible storm, and, on the verge of shipwreck, offered up a prayer to the Lady of Guadalupe for preservation. They vowed that if this miracle was vouchsafed, they would take the mast of their ship and set it up as a votive offering on the hill which is sacred to her memory. The ship and her crew were saved, and the men carried out their promise ; but so miraculous was their escape that money was subscribed to erect something of a more lasting nature than a wooden mast, and accordingly these strange-looking Stone Sails were put up in token of gratitude, and as evidence of the wonderful power of the Sacred Lady.

From a little distance the sails appear so real that it seems as if whitish-grey canvas were actually spread out upon the mast of a ship, and one wonders how anything so high and so thin in stone—a foot being about the thickness—can stand alone. One finds, however, on nearer inspection that the sails have a strong granite buttress as a brace.

At the bottom of the stair is the spring, over which a handsome building has been erected. This is besieged during the Pilgrims' week. The Indians all want to drink the sacred water, and everyone is anxious to procure some to take home. They therefore buy old bottles from people sitting at the edge of the gutter, with odds and ends of glass upon the roadway before them, and believe the bottle adds to the efficacy of the water. The

contents cost nothing but the trouble of fetching, the bottle probably is worth two to three centavos. When filled, they are kept safe by means of the strangest devices. The men generally put them inside their shirt; but, as the cotton bodice of a woman is merely a square with a hole in it, and the ends hang down, she has no means of securing her treasure in that way. She therefore unpacks her baby, and ties up the precious bottle in the blue rag in company with her offspring.

There is no doubt about it that the feast day of the Lady of Guadalupe means to the Mexican even more than the Lourdes pilgrimage to the European. It is all wonderful; inspiring in some respects, religious in others, dramatic, and extremely sad. It shows the enormous strength of the Roman Catholic religion, and yet at the same time its want of power in not putting a stop to the claptrap, cheap-jack element surrounding the sacred proceedings.

By midnight on the 12th December everything was over, and that vast multitude had started on its homeward journey, even to the borders of Texas, a thousand miles and more distant. It once happened that a husband and his wife and son were travelling by an excursion train to Guadalupe. The man died on the way, but the woman and youth declining to be deterred from attending the festival, left him behind at a station for burial. Such a small thing as the death of a husband could not be permitted to interfere with the celebration of their Sacred Lady!

As at Lourdes, there are strange and wonderful pictures upon the walls at Guadalupe, more strange because they are the work of Indians, and more wonderful because in many instances they are painted by people without any education whatever, some of them being two and three centuries old. Here is a man depicted carried through the desert by a lion; he died this way, and this extraordinary hieroglyphic is an offering for his soul. There is a youth thrown out of a

window, murder no doubt, and beside it is the picture of an engine running over a woman's body, suicide perhaps. A few of these illustrations represent people dying in bed, but a bed is so little known that it rarely appears, and when it does is somewhat remarkable in drawing! A child being devoured by some wild beast, a fire with legs sticking out of the flames, anything and everything serves for a subject, and each picture is more marvellous than the last.

Then again, in the church are several black cloth panels about 8 feet by 3, framed, on which hang rows, as tightly packed as possible, of silver arms, legs, hands or feet, thank-offerings for mercies vouchsafed. They are only about two inches long, and many hundreds cover each panel.

Votive offerings are to be found in all the churches. A cow, horse, donkey, pig, lizard, scorpion, or a saddle. The cow has been offered in gratitude for the advent of a fine calf, the pig for having produced a good litter, the horse because some favourite steed has been saved from death; the scorpion for restored health after a terrible bite. In short, these emblems are without end, and their meanings are not difficult to understand.

The Shrine of the Lady of Guadalupe is the Holiest in all Mexico. Pilgrims are to be found there at their devotions from year's end to year's end; but the most interesting and strange pilgrimage to our mind occurred the night before December 12th, when all was wrapt in mystery. That scene was something to be remembered; nothing in Rome or Venice at Eastertide, at Lourdes or Oberamergau, or any other European spot, ever appeared so picturesque, so wild and so romantic, as the evening service at Guadalupe and the sleeping worshippers outside the sacred building.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL PORFIRIO DIAZ, PRESIDENT OF MEXICO.

I WENT to Mexico inspired with profound respect and admiration for General Porfirio Diaz, a man who ascended a throne—so to speak—when revolution was in the air, murder of daily occurrence, property unsafe, and universal riot reigned supreme. It was not, however, until I had met him and spent some time in his company, not until I had lived several months in Mexico, that I fully realised the extraordinary ability of its President.

That Porfirio Diaz was the greatest man of the nineteenth century may seem a strong assertion, but a glance, even one so cursory as this must be, will prove the fact. His life has been a long romance; an early struggle for existence, war and strife, wounds so severe that many times death seemed imminent; imprisonment, dangerous escapes, military success, and then a Presidentship—all these events have followed in quick succession in the career of this extraordinary individual.

Diaz was born September 15th, 1830, so that when I first saw him he was seventy, but looked years younger.

His position is absolutely unique in the world's history, for although President of a Republic, he has reigned for over twenty years. His will is all powerful, as great, in fact, as that of a Tsar and Pope combined. He



General Porfirio Diaz, President of Mexico.

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is a monarchical yet democratic ruler. He controls millions of people with a hand of iron, still they love him. He is a *despot*, but at the same time leads the unassuming life of a private gentleman. He walks alone in the streets, cares nothing for pomp in his daily existence, and plays the rôle of a simple home-loving citizen to perfection.

Although of Indian descent—and to this fact he probably owes that sympathy with his people which makes him understand their character so well, and has given him so much power—he is also descended from the Spaniards who left their mother country in the early years of the conquest of Mexico by Cortés.

On his father's side he has good ancestry, and his grandmother was an Indian woman of Miztecas tribe, one of the finest peoples of Mexico.

The General's father kept a little inn at Oaxaca (pronounced O-ah-hack-ah) in Southern Mexico, and here the President and six other children were born ; three years after the birth of Porfirio his father died of cholera, and the mother left with her young family and limited means to battle with the world. The daily struggle to provide food and clothing for her children was great ; but, being a brave, clever woman, she succeeded admirably.

Until he was seven years old, Porfirio went to the village primary school, and at fourteen joined the free school belonging to the Roman Catholic priests, with the intention of entering the Church later on. His education was provided free, but as he grew older, being of an independent spirit, he earned a small income by teaching, with a portion of which money he was able to pay for more advanced learning for himself. That the boy is father to the man, was indeed proved in his early career. Young Diaz from the first showed his ability of imparting knowledge, and at the same time gaining it. This power has stood him in good stead through life.

The priests found that in Porfirio Diaz they had to do with no ordinary lad. They realised he might prove of service to the Church, and feeling that their influence, which up to then had been practically unbounded, seemed a little less secure, they offered him a scholarship when he was nineteen years of age, and proposed also to confer a minor ecclesiastical order upon him. He thanked them, but refused. All idea of entering the Church was over. Circumstances and learning had weaned him from his first intention of taking Holy orders, and he decided rather to be a soldier and fight for his country.

He felt Mexico wanted strong men; he knew revolution must be stamped out if a land was ever to be successful.

Almost side by side with Porfirio Diaz, Benito Juarez (pronounced Huarez) had grown up. These two men, so nearly of an age, eventually became deadly enemies. Both were Presidents of Mexico, and to these two wonderful personalities Mexico owes her strength to-day.

As a bare-footed Indian lad Juarez had originally been a servant in a monastery; but on finding that he possessed a brilliant intellect, the priests educated him to be a "pillar of the Church." He loved learning, studied theology, and read ecclesiastical history. A keen scholar and deep thinker, he worked on and on until, like Diaz, he saw that a civil power and not a clerical body must govern a country.

Thus it came about that this same Juarez, brought up among priests to be their prop, turned against them, and with a Herculean stroke overthrew the Roman Catholic sway in Mexico. 'Tis a strange history which is unfolded in the lives of these two men. Their upbringing was somewhat identical, their religious inclinations similar, yet they finally became rivals, and while Juarez

began the evolution of Mexico, when he overthrew the Catholic Church, Diaz completed it by military discipline.

Juarez' action was a remarkable feat, for it meant far more than at first appears. Two-thirds of the wealth of the country was in the hands of the priests; the entire destiny of the land was under their control. They could make, or mar, a revolution, and they frequently did so for the benefit of their monasteries and churches. Every hacienda or farm in the country had to render a tenth of its produce in tithes. The Church, full of corruption, reigned supreme; the people feared the priests, but submitted. Mexico was completely under their sway; her very life-blood was sucked by them. She was paralyzed mentally and morally. The strength of the Catholic faith was immense; but the foundation was rotten; Juarez knew that, and believed in his own power, and the cause for which he was fighting.

He was a great man. What did he do?

He simply overturned the Catholic Church; he destroyed its vast influence by confiscating its wealth, for by bribes had revolutions hitherto been controlled and men's mouths closed. The beginning of Mexico's prosperity undoubtedly commenced with Juarez' masterful overthrow of the Catholic supremacy.

Since his day, no priest or nun has been allowed to walk in the streets clothed in the garb of the Church, and all monasteries and similar ecclesiastical bodies have been swept away.

Up to that time the country was riddled with monasteries and convents. One of the largest of the former, belonging to the Franciscan brotherhood in Mexico City, was overthrown in the memory of many persons still living. At twelve o'clock one night Juarez and his soldiers entered the building and took possession; the monks—hundreds of them—were made prisoners. Great was the consternation

next morning when the news became known. The ladies of the town, arrayed in black, marched round the monastery, solemnly cursing men who could do such deeds, or prayed at street corners for the good fathers of the Church. This old monastery is now a hotel; most of the convents nowa days are hotels, schools, or public buildings.

Juarez was elected President in 1862, and a year later the religious orders were suppressed. The French invaded the country in 1863, and in June, 1864, Maximilian was crowned Emperor. The following year the latter published a decree declaring all persons in arms against the Imperial Government to be bandits, who would be shot. Several people accordingly suffered death. It was at this juncture the United States protested against a French army in Mexico, and sent a despatch to that effect to Napoleon III. Troubles ensued, till in 1866 Napoleon withdrew his support from Maximilian, and a few months later ordered the evacuation by French troops, who were all recalled by February, 1867. About this period Porfirio Diaz began to rise, but for a moment we must go back.

As we have seen, Juarez, who preceded Diaz by only a few years, was an able man. Had it not been for Juarez, Diaz would probably never have succeeded as he has done. That overthrow of the Church was a masterly act, which paved the way for future developments. Juarez died in 1872.

Young Diaz, after refusing all priestly aid, as has been said, studied law for a time. In the year 1853 Santa Anna was Dictator, and Diaz, not approving of his methods of proceeding, voted against him; for this an order for arrest was issued against Diaz, who had to flee. It was then, at the age of twenty-three, he entered on his military career.

Santa Anna was defeated, and the Liberal Government under Juarez came into power.

Those were exciting days for young Diaz. He was wounded many times; on one occasion he carried a ball in

his body for several months before it could be extracted ; but surely, though slowly, he acquired military rank, gained vast experience in practical soldiering, grew strong and healthy, learnt how to submit to a commander, and finally how to command.

It is needless to enumerate the small battles that filled those years ; suffice it to say Diaz rose steadily and honourably to the position of General.

Mexico, with her fifteen millions of people, was in a terrible condition. One hundred and fifty different languages and dialects were spoken by the various Indian tribes. There had been fifty-two Presidents, Dictators, and Emperors in fifty-nine years, and disorder and revolution prevailed from end to end of the land.

The United States, France and Maximilian, Juarez against the Church, all were at war with one another. The country was heavily in debt, and probably no land has ever been less safe for human life, or more unsettled than Mexico about the middle of the nineteenth century. After the French troops left, the power of Diaz began to assert itself. A month or two later he captured the cities of Puebla and San Lorenzo.

Now came the crucial moment in the career of General Diaz. He had been fighting for many years, he knew every mile of the country ; he had ridden through the mountains for weeks at a time, and felt the temper of the people. Chaos reigned ; excitement was in the air. Every hand was raised against his fellow. Law and order were unknown, the country was devastated by battle and murder. Many had tried to control the populace and failed. Fifty-two men in fifty-nine years had not succeeded in their attempts to put down disorder, a fact that spoke for itself. Was any man strong enough to combat such a state of affairs ?

Two days after the execution of Maximilian (June, 1867), General Diaz triumphantly entered the City of Mexico. This was the turning point in his career ; he was not

elected President for several years, but he was daily gaining ground everywhere.

In 1876—nine years after the death of Maximilian, and just one hundred years after the Declaration of Independence in the United States—General Porfirio Diaz rode again into the City, this time at the head of the Revolutionary army, and shortly afterwards was proclaimed President.

Thus he started a new rule and a new life for old Mexico, the birth—so to speak—of modern Mexico, of which he may well be proud.

At the time of his entry, Lerdo was acting as a sort of Vice-President to Juarez. Diaz had always failed in his endeavours to overthrow his rival Juarez, but Lerdo was a very different man, for, although highly educated, he was lazy ; he was neither a soldier nor a diplomatist, and thus it was that Diaz, at last successful, realised what had been his dream for years.

The General stationed his army outside the town by Guadalupe, of pilgrimage fame, and when all was ready marched boldly into Mexico City. Many persons have described that scene to me. General Diaz, well-mounted, sitting erect, his head raised high, with a look of determination on his face, a sort of “do or die” expression. He was dressed in his General’s uniform, and was followed by a large part of his Revolutionary army. The crowd cheered ; the crowd hissed ; the multitude fought amongst themselves, but on he rode, only pressing his lips closer together. His entry was so powerful, so masterful, that many who had previously been against him were hypnotised by the manner of the man, and from that moment became his devoted adherents. Thus on November 23, 1876, General Diaz rode up to the Palace where he established himself, practically for life !

He ordered Congress to be dissolved. A new election took place. He was elected President ; that was

a red-letter day for Mexico, and the first step towards her present ascendancy.

The new President soon swept out General Lerdo's troops; he shot outlaws, deserters and rioters wholesale, and began his military sway with an iron hand, the only possible mode of governing such a country. He knew his people, was he not one of them? He felt the way to rule was to clear the land of bandits and revolutionists, to sweep away the ringleaders, and then control the remaining populace. The people feared him, they knew his strength, they felt his power, and now, only a quarter of a century later, they have learnt to love him, and are led by a silken cord!

As a President he was cautious; he had no diplomatic experience to help him, and he knew but little of government and law. Accordingly he chose two of the greatest lawyers of the day to join his Ministry, and sought their advice. At the end of a few months, however, he discovered that they were working against him, and trying to make parties for their own ends. With that belief in his own strength, which has always stood him through life, he dismissed them, to the amazement of everyone. They with others had hoped—while apparently working with him—to raise a revolution against Diaz; but he was too strong for them. He had come to stay.

A large part of the country scoffed at him as President, declared he was only a soldier, and for months, aye even a couple of years, General Diaz' position was uncertain. There were several minor revolutions, he was surrounded by enemies, jealousy and hatred were rife on every side; people expected to overthrow him, as all his predecessors had been in turn unseated. But he was strong, and proved the conqueror. Time showed him to be the greatest man in Mexico. He has slowly and steadily risen to power and respect, risen from a country lad to be one of the greatest Dictators the world has

known. As a soldier he has quelled war and established peace. As a ruler he has made a country—formerly insecure even to its own inhabitants—safe for all. As a diplomat he is at peace with the world. He has paid enormous debts, and created solvency—now even developing into wealth—in Mexico.

Has any other man in the nineteenth century done as much? We have had a Napoleon, no doubt a greater despot; a Moltke, a greater soldier; a Beaconsfield, a finer politician; a Talleyrand, a greater diplomatist; but has any man of humble origin, practically self-educated, raised himself to such a position, and brought his country from battle and murder to peace and prosperity?

When Diaz became President he was forty-six years of age, just in the prime of life, health and strength; but even his powers were taxed to the uttermost. Plot and intrigue met him on every side; he lived for years on a political volcano, surrounded by prejudices both religious and civil; his life was attempted over and over again; poison and powder were aimed at him, his friends were often enemies in disguise; yet in spite of all Porfirio Diaz has conquered triumphantly.

In 1900 he was elected President for the sixth time, for a further term of four years, in fact, with one break—namely in 1880—he has already ruled his country for more than twenty years. He came in on the “one term platform,” and at the end of four years had to give way to General Gonzales; but after that he returned to power, and being thus continuously re-elected, seems likely to die in harness.

My first meeting with the President was somewhat strange. A few months previously, when dining with Mr. Charles Maclaren, M.P., in Belgrave Square, I met a friend, Sir Weetman Pearson, M.P., and told him I was leaving the following week for Canada and the States, and

intended to winter in Mexico. He at once suggested giving me an introduction to the President and other people of note, as he has many business relations with Mexico.

"I will ask the Governor of the Federal District, Señor Guillermo de Landa y Escandon, to try and arrange a meeting for you," he replied; "but the General speaks nothing but Spanish."

This was rather a blow, for what is the use of knowing three languages, when the one most wanted was not available. Unfortunately I knew no Spanish, but necessity is a wonderful teacher, and I picked up sufficient knowledge of that language for all practical purposes. I trust General Diaz will forgive me if I say that, even without any fluency in that tongue, we became good friends.

It was a glorious day in December, 1900, cold but sunny, when Señor and Señora de Landa called for me in their carriage with its smart English coachman. All the great folk in Mexico have English coachmen, and as many of the ladies speak nothing but Spanish, the arrangement at times proves a little droll.

In the late afternoon—about sundown—the aristocracy of the City take their drive. Most people use closed carriages, and up and down, up and down that fine Boulevard, to and from the Castle of Chapultepec, they roll in the dark—twilight there is none—and imagine they are enjoying themselves! The grand ladies are seldom seen during daylight, except at early mass; they come out like bats in the dark, yet they need not be shy, for many of them are extremely good-looking, with lovely dark hair and eyes, and wonderful teeth.

We started early, before the fashionable world was out, so that I might see the view from Chapultepec, the former home of Montezuma, who was Emperor of Mexico when the Spaniard Cortés arrived in 1519.

The present Palace, now the summer residence of

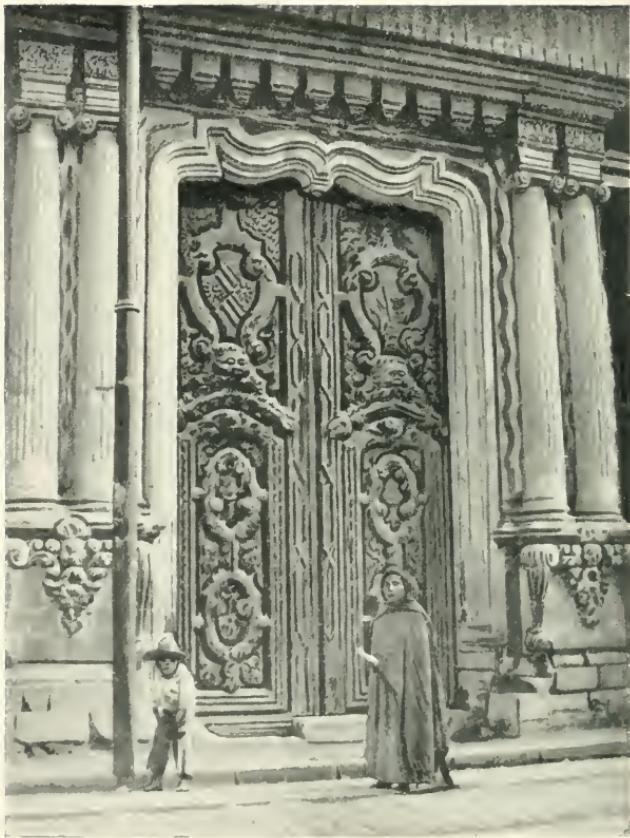
President Diaz, stands on a high rock in the middle of a great plain. The public drive is below, between wondrous cypress trees, where the band plays, and at the Restaurant many entertainments are given; but no one dares go up the hill without an order, except the students of the military college, who share with the President the privilege of living at the top.

Mexico is full of romance, and in a spring-fed pool at the bottom of the hill, nestling among those glorious trees, dwells the water sprite Malinche. This being spends her days at the foot of Chapultepec; she woos the passer-by with music, is gentle and sweet, a goddess of love and goodness, but the legend says that at nightfall she flies miles and miles away, her voice grows mournful, and sometimes she becomes very wicked.

'Tis a pretty little legend, and one of, oh, so many!

Don Guillermo de Landa was not only Governor of the Federal District, he was also Mayor of the town, and we drove up to the Palace amid salutes on all sides.

On arriving at the summit, what a view lay spread before us! Probably the finest view in the whole world is to be seen from Chapultepec. Below lies the City of Mexico, originally founded, in ~~1519~~¹⁵²⁴, by the Aztecs, under the name of Tenochtitlan, while beyond are the lakes which, doubtless, millions, aye, billions of years ago, filled the entire valley with water. Ten miles away, rising almost perpendicularly from the basin, begins a grand chain of mountains. There, on the right, almost tapering to a point, is the volcano Popocatepetl, some 17,782 feet in height, while next to him is the snow lady Ixtaccihuatl, 16,062 feet high. They are more imposing than the Alps, because their snow-crowned summits tower singly into the heavens above, and the extent of valley below adds strength and grandeur to their rugged peaks. There is a feeling of



Door-way in Mexico City.

immensity, nothing confined or shut in. The panorama is sublime.

It chanced to be a glorious sunset. The snow was coral pink, tinged by the hand of the Almighty, and the clouds swiftly chasing one another across the sky, and over the mountains themselves were pink, and blue, and grey in turn. Mexico is famous for her skyscapes, and certainly that night she surpassed herself.

Yes, the view from Chapultepec was the grandest, the most imposing and, in those soft evening lights, the most sublime, I have ever gazed upon in the course of many wanderings. Well may the Mexicans be proud of their land. One moment the picture seemed all ablaze with red and yellow, and the next, as though a curtain fell suddenly from heaven, all was dark.

We saw the Palace—the Pompeian court arranged by poor Maximilian, the roof-garden with roses, geraniums, and gorgeous-leaved plants growing in the open air at Christmas time ; but inside the building was disappointing, for the rooms were all furnished with modern French upholstery, not even Spanish ! Large verandahs, palms and banana plants, gave an Eastern effect, and yet a chilliness filled the air.

On returning from our drive we went to call on the President and Madame Diaz ; their winter home is in the town—the doors were flung wide, and we drove into the patio.

Now a Mexican house has a style all its own. Large doors lead to a courtyard open to the roof. The bottom floor is assigned to the servants and offices—the coach-house, stables, etc., are all on the ground floor—and the President's home was no exception. We ascended a handsome flight of marble stairs, and reached the first floor, off which all the chief rooms opened. The gallery with its flowers and plants was exposed to the elements, which is a strange

thing about Mexican homes. Often in winter it is really cold, and the summer is tremendously hot—the sun even on a winter's day gives great heat—but when it is cold, the cold is penetrating. Mexicans, however, though accustomed to warmth out of doors, live with open patios, rarely have a fireplace, and never hot water pipes; consequently, their houses with polished floors, light furniture, thin curtains, and utterly devoid of artificial heat, are in winter cold, while the bedrooms at night send a chill through one on entering. The natural result of all this is that pneumonia, which often ends in death, is common.

On our arrival, the porter below having rung up, we found a door of the gallery open, and a couple of footmen wearing English livery waiting to bow us in.

Madame Diaz was expecting us. She is perfectly delightful. Tall and dark, extremely good-looking, with pretty manners and gracious ways, she wins all hearts, added to which, "Carmelita," as she is universally called, having been educated in the United States, speaks English and French fluently. She is the President's second wife, and by her gentle birth, tact and kindly thought has done much to soften the harder and rougher side of his character. Her womanly influence came to him at a time when it was no longer necessary to rule with such an iron hand, and she guided him to softer measures and more diplomatic ways.

Her drawing-room, upholstered in French style, was pretty and dainty, and her welcome most cordial and graceful. When I got to know her better I found her a charming woman, with the manners of a diplomatist, the most gracious way of saying pleasant things; well-read, keenly interested in many subjects, Carmelita is indeed a wonderful woman.

A few minutes after our arrival the President himself walked in. He is a man of medium height, probably about five feet eight or nine inches, broadly built, and



Madame Diaz.

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wearing his grey hair closely cut. Diaz, who looks under sixty—though in reality ten years older—has all the bearing of a soldier, the manners of a courtier, and the graciousness of a friend. He is quick and alert in movement, has a delightful and kindly smile; but his head and jaw denote strength and a profound depth of character. His clear dark eyes are deep-set and thoughtful, his nose large, with dilating nostrils; the forehead high, the face long, and one is instantly struck by the clearness of the dark skin and the look of youth and vitality.

I had expected much from so remarkable a man, the maker and ruler of an Empire—but he more than came up to my expectations. There is something in his manner which at once wins confidence and commands respect, a certain quiet repose, and yet that healthy complexion and deep chest denote the man of action and exercise. He might be a smart English colonel, so well-preserved is he. He speaks clearly and incisively, likes conversation to be to the point, but rather enjoys being chaffed occasionally, when a merry twinkle comes in his eyes, proof that a vast store of humour lies behind that rugged mask.

With a courtly bow, he said he had never regretted his inability to speak English more than on the present occasion, but that I must forgive him, for he had never had time to learn, though he thought English so essential that it was now being taught in all public schools. He was a great believer in education, he said, but it must come to a nation gradually. Let people read first, and then they want to know more, and learn for themselves. He has organised an excellent system, under which every Indian must learn to read, write and cipher; higher grades are open for those who wish to profit by them.

“I believe this education will awaken the country, and prove an inestimable boon,” he said.

Is he right? Is the Indian ripe for such education?

The nation is still full of superstition, it believes in witchcraft and fears the devil. Man is by nature a hunter, an agriculturalist, or a rearer of stock, according to his environment. The Mexican native sleeps upon the bare ground, lives on very little, has few wants and no knowledge. In many cases he is lazy, owing to the climate, and is often nothing more than an animal, sometimes with instincts less noble and brave. He is happy, for he knows no better. He is artistic at heart—see his dress, the colours he chooses, his pottery, and—wonderful for a rude people—he admires fine scenery! But educate him, and what will happen? Therein lies a great problem. People who employ Indians prefer those who can neither read nor write; they have their own ideas, and have not, as yet, acquired the conflicting influence of others.

President Diaz spoke of the Transvaal War, and was glad to know that General Roberts was then on his way home.

“He has done splendid work. How old is he?” he inquired.

“Seventy, I think,” was my reply.

“Ah, my own age. I thought so. Wonderful man. Old men in England are your greatest men” (a remark Ibsen also made to me). “That is because you live healthily, take exercise, and keep the body active.”

Speaking of Kitchener’s preference for unmarried soldiers, of which he had read somewhere, he said:—

“He is quite right. A married man may be just as good a soldier; but if he be a good husband, he fights with a sad heart. I am quite as much a soldier at heart as ever I was,” he added; “I have followed every move in this war, and all the chief articles in foreign papers are translated for me every day.”

This remark was typical of the man. He has everything of import translated for him. He knows all that is going

on ; no one could possibly be more up-to-date, and with his splendid memory he forgets nothing.

Somehow, the conversation drifted to the superstitions of the Indians. Strange to say, Diaz, in spite of his birth, is not in the least superstitious. He started forth a few years ago, for the United States, one of a party of thirteen. They had a lovely time, and "all lived happily for years afterwards," as he merrily put it.

I told him, Nansen had been one of thirteen on his Polar Expedition, the most successful of all the North Pole Explorations ; the only one, in fact, without any loss of life whatever. He chuckled with pleasure, and pointing to a rug made from the skin of a Polar bear, which lay at our feet, said :—

"That is the nearest I shall ever go to the Pole."

And so we chatted on and on for a couple of hours. Madame Diaz or Señor de Landa doing the translating. So accustomed is the President to this triangular style of conversation that it does not seem to worry him in the least, and as I could understand most of the Spanish, even at that early stage of my stay in Mexico, the difficulties were considerably lessened. Whatever the subject touched upon, the President seemed to know all about it, and when he did not know, he just asked ; at least he asked me several questions about England, which showed he was anxious to learn all that was possible. Only fools are too shy to seek information and acquire knowledge.

Before we left he promised his photograph and that of his wife, and kindly offered me a seat in his box at a grand concert to be given in honour of his re-election as President, therefore, although a stranger, and he a charming despot, I left his house feeling I had gained a friend. With the most courtly air he offered me his arm, and in spite of all arguments insisted on escorting me down the wide marble staircase to the patio and waiting until we were seated in

the carriage, when with many kindly words of farewell he bowed low as we drove away. It is by such little acts he wins all hearts, for he is a grand gentleman in bearing, his manners in his own house being regal yet friendly. He was bravery personified as a soldier, he is a politician and a ruler, and he has made himself all these despite his Indian blood and struggle for education. Diaz has climbed from the lowest rung of life's ladder to one of its topmost pinnacles. No one ever impressed me more than the President of Mexico. There is a reserved strength, a quiet force about him which commands respect, a kindly gentleness that wins affection. Each time I saw him I learnt some new trait in his character, and felt how immeasurably above ordinary mankind this self-made ruler undoubtedly was.

Many people spoke to me of Diaz. One of the great railway officials of Mexico once said :

“ His memory never fails, and his grasp of a subject is extraordinary. If I have to go back to him concerning some subject a month later, and waver one iota in fact or figure from what I said before, the President at once pulls me up, and reminds me that I stated so and so.”

On another occasion I was talking to a scientific man, who remarked :

“ Yes, Diaz often astonishes me. If he does not understand a thing, he asks for an explanation. He never has to be told twice ; he seems to be able to grasp a subject immediately, and if at a later period I refer to it, he says ‘ Oh yes, I remember you explained that last time.’ ”

These are only casual testimonies ; but they show the capacity of the man for mastering detail, and retaining the knowledge he assimilates.

When re-elected President from 1900 to 1904, General Diaz received the deputation on the terrace at the Castle of Chapultepec, and was informed of the wish of his people

in the following terms by Congressman Alfredo Chavero who acted as spokesman and said :—

“In the name of the electors I come to announce to you the result of the voting which terminated but a few moments ago. The majority of those who are present remember, and all of us know, that on June 21, 1867, a memorable date for the country, you raised aloft in the capital of the Republic the national flag, which in its folds contained the seed of the fortunate era of peace we now enjoy. The electors have charged me to inform you that they consider it altogether necessary that you continue to guide the destinies of the nation, whose will it is that you remain at your post to perfect your work. All of us know that the attractions of home life are great; but all of us realise that the power of making a nation happy is a boon still greater. This is the task which the people entrust to you, and which they hope you will accept for the good of all. Cicero said that to be happy a man needed four things; to have travelled, to have a son, to have built a house, and to have planted a tree. Your travels, General, have extended all over the Republic, holding aloft and defending the banner of liberty, the glorious and triumphant standard of the nation. As a moral personality you are the father of the Mexican people. The edifice which you have built is the Nation, and in its soil you have planted the olive tree of peace. The entire country acclaims you at the present moment and extols your name as that of its most conspicuous citizen, and the most suitable person to guide its destinies. It deposits its whole trust in you, and does not doubt that you will sacrifice yourself to the duty which it lays upon you.”

The President made the following reply :

“Gentlemen: It is a great honour for a citizen to be called to the position of President of the Republic. But the honour is still greater when it is conferred by the unanimous will of the nation, when the elections prove that the Mexican people have, with the full sincerity of their hearts, centred their desires on a single person. I must add that I am most grateful to the electors of the six electoral districts of the capital of the Republic who have come to inform me of the result of the elections. It is my duty to say that in seeking the cause of the nation’s prosperity in the personal qualifications of its ruler there is danger of committing an error. It is my firm belief that the mere confidence which a nation feels in its ruler forestalls the latter’s task; that confidence is the basis of all government, the foundation of the administrative edifice, and is the cause and earnest of prosperity. Possessing that factor the success of any government is assured. As to the result of the elections which are now taking place, I

must repeat what I said some months ago when the period of electoral gestation was just beginning, viz., that neither my age nor my capabilities qualify me to continue ruling the country. I am seventy years of age, of which forty-three have been devoted to the active service of the fatherland. As to my abilities, I re-affirm my previous opinion, and I can only add that I will not withhold from my country my closing years, if she requires them of me, any more than I have begrudged to her the unstinted services of my whole life."

The conclusion of the President's words was the signal for a tremendous ovation. Above all, the modesty with which General Diaz spoke of his incomparable services deeply touched all hearers. Personal congratulations were then offered to the President, while the artillery band played some of its most stirring national selections.

Probably by contrast to the turmoil of the greater part of his life, General Diaz now prefers retirement. He rises early, and after his coffee works with his secretaries, reads the Mexican papers and translations of others, and then goes off quietly to the Municipal Palace, as often as not alone and on foot. Then the audiences for the day commence—a day full of diverse work, for he superintends everything, goes into all details whether railways, mines, schools, church matters, military, diplomatic or commercial affairs. He dines about two o'clock, after which he enjoys a siesta, and by four is ready for coffee and more work. He takes his evening meal between eight and nine, and occasionally plays a game of billiards.

President Diaz does not go much into society ; his whole life is given to the government of his country, and his home. It is a perfect home life, and no wonder, with such a wife. She helps the President in many ways, and though she has no children of her own, is nevertheless charming to his children by a former marriage, and was very enthusiastic over the advent of the first grandchild while I was there.

Madame Diaz, besides being handsome, is always

beautifully dressed. In some ways she reminds me of Queen Alexandra in type and bearing.

I once asked Madame Diaz if she ever wore a high comb and mantilla.

"No," she replied, "a comb never, a mantilla only sometimes at church."

"But why not? They are both so charming!"

She laughed.

"We think them old-fashioned, and have quite given them up, but the President often suggests my using a comb again. He likes the style."

"And does General Diaz wear the riding dress still?"

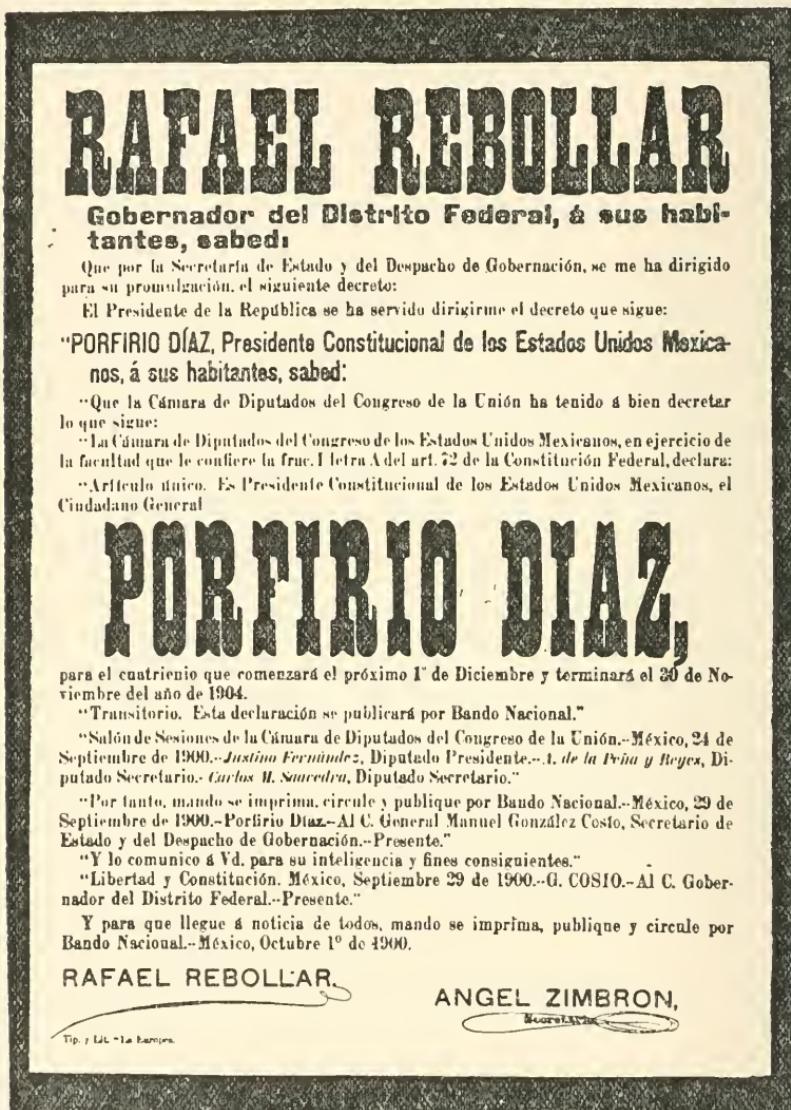
"Yes, sometimes, but that is going out too."

What a pity! We are all sinking to one dead level. Soon there will be no special manners, customs or dress left. We shall all be exactly alike. Each country is becoming famous for some particular style, which the others copy. For instance, the French cuisine reigns supreme. England leads the fashion for men's clothes. Paris ordains what women shall wear. America gives us our latest inventions. Germany monopolises cheap manufacture. National individuality is rapidly disappearing.

Whenever there is any reform in the Constitution of Mexico, or a Presidential election takes place, the fact has to be publicly notified by means of a "bando," just as is the case at the Mansion House in London.

In Mexico, all the members of the Municipality drive in open carriages through the streets, headed by the Public Notary, whose duty it is to see that the Proclamation is duly affixed at twelve important public places. A body of troops of five or six regiments accompanies the municipal officers, and crowds gather in the streets to cheer them on their way. As each copy is posted the bells of the churches are set ringing, and the soldiers present arms.

Below is the notice of the sixth election of General Diaz to the Presidency, posted on December 1st, 1900.



Before I left Mexico, General Diaz fell ill. Rumours increased in circulation as they spread, and apparently other countries imagined he was dying, if not already dead. Revolutions were predicted, shares dropped appreciably, and everyone prepared for the worst.

All this was quite unnecessary. The President was very ill—he is three-score years and ten—but he is in reality a strong healthy man, many years younger than his actual age. Diaz has been the architect and builder of modern Mexico, and so well has he done his work, it is extremely unlikely that anyone will undo it. The country has been at peace for a quarter of a century, everything has improved, and the men who have helped the President to bring this about, are round him to day. Even if he were to die, they would remain.

There are many able men in Mexico besides the President. It is invidious to draw comparisons, but General Bernardo Reyes, Hon. José Ives Limantour, and Hon. Ignacio Mariscal are the persons to whom I would specially refer.

General Reyes is a strong man. He is a soldier; his interests are wide, and after living many years at Monterey in Northern Mexico, he speaks English like an American! He is still in the prime of life, and has proved an excellent Minister of War and Marine. He can organise and command, and some day may be called upon to do both on a much larger scale. Being a soldier, he holds the heart of the people, who are accustomed to military rule.

There is one party in Mexico which speaks of Limantour as Diaz' probable successor, but this is hardly likely. He is a splendid man, however, most able in finance, and older than Reyes; but even were he to succeed temporarily, it is improbable that Mexico would be content for long with one who was neither a soldier, nor yet of Mexican blood, excellent though he might otherwise be.

I am not a politician, but I heard and saw much while

in the Republic. Unless anything unforeseen should happen, General Diaz may be spared for many years to come ; but surely he might ease his own burdens somewhat by appointing a successor whom he could guide and help. Reyes, Limantour or Mariscal will probably be the man ; each is thoroughly capable, and Mexico is far too settled for any revolution to be likely. It must be remembered, Mexico is accustomed to a military dictator, that is the government the people understand.

Diaz was a soldier, living an arduous military life, at a time when Mexico had sixteenth century ideas, and was ruled by Church despotism, reminiscent of the middle ages ; but Diaz was a wonderful man. He shook himself free from the trammels of the past, and carved out a development for himself, and a future for his country. It was as a general of the army he declared himself President of the Republic, although of late years it is not, perhaps, so much as a military despot, but rather as a diplomatic ruler that he has reigned. His power is absolute. His vote gives a man office ; there are no constitutional limits to his authority. Diaz has proved capable in every issue. The wheels of state are well oiled, and no man is likely to be foolish enough to try and upset a régime that is acknowledged by the entire world to be a success.

A man who has increased railroads from four hundred miles to eight thousand in his short reign, who has encouraged manufacturers and agriculturalists everywhere, and helped forward home industries is a great man, and in all probability no one will endeavour to change his organisations or systems of government. While he was ill, Señor Mariscal was appointed Deputy President, but to guard against trouble in the future, it would surely be well for President Diaz to elect his own successor now. His word is law ; the man he chooses and guides, and believes capable, will be eagerly accepted by the people.

No one, of course, can dictate to Diaz, for no man is more competent to control his fellow men ; but perhaps the idea of providing for the future may occur to him. Suppose he should appoint General Reyes ? He is a soldier, and military rule is necessary. He is a Mexican, and a native President is imperative ; he is a politician, and a man with such knowledge is indispensable. He knows and approves the "Diaz" policy. He has travelled, has lived among English-speaking people, and is a man of culture as well as strength. He is Minister of War, and already controls thirty thousand men armed with Mauser rifles. He is likewise the idol of the Mexican army.

Bernardo Reyes was born in Guadalajara in 1850, so he is still in the prime of life. Not only is he a soldier, he is also a statesman of unblemished character. He has always displayed extraordinary bravery ; has been a prisoner, taken part in warfare and strife before Porfirio Diaz became President, at which time the rebels deserted him, whereupon he surrendered to Diaz. So excellent was his record for bravery, patriotism and loyalty that the new President appointed young Reyes commander of the Sixth Regiment of Cavalry. Years of active work were passed in quieting outbreaks in various parts of Mexico ; but it was not till 1880, when Reyes took part in a great action at Villa Union, receiving three dangerous wounds, that the power of the man was fully recognised, and he was subsequently made a General.

He is a delightful man, everyone speaks of him in terms of highest praise ; he is an educated soldier, with charming manners and considerable political and diplomatic knowledge. A strong Liberal in politics, he is a staunch friend and admirer of President Diaz, in whose footsteps he loyally treads.

Señor José Limantour, whom I value much as a friend,

is more French than Mexican, although he is Minister of Finance. A man whose opinion the world holds in high esteem exclaimed of him :—

“ He is one of the cleverest men in any government of the present day.” This was high praise, and undoubtedly Limantour is one who impresses the stranger with his clear vision, broad views, and general conception of facts. A tall, thin man with grey hair, he looks more like a great Church dignitary than a Minister of State. His suave French manners and gentlemanly bearing cover strength of character and determined will. He is rich, lives in a lovely house, and has a most affable and charming wife. Like so many Mexicans he is a believer in the value of an intimate acquaintance with foreign languages, and his daughter—a sweet girl—speaks French and English faultlessly. She has always had resident foreign governesses, and although she has never been in England, one might in conversation almost take her for an Englishwoman.

It is said that Mexico’s Minister of Finance and Mr. Gladstone were the only two men able to put a Budget in an attractive form. Be that as it may, in his annual review of the financial situation and Budget estimates for 1901, he gives interesting details regarding the income and expenditure of the Government that afford conclusive evidence of the steady progress and development of Mexico during the last few years. The yield from import duties marks the growing foreign trade of the country, the revenue from this source having almost doubled in seven years, as shown by the following table :

Fiscal Years.	Import Duties.	Difference.
1893-94	\$15,313,926 59	
1894-95	17,738,129 66	\$2,424,203 07
1895-96	21,492,211 91	3,754,082 25
1896-97	21,481,225 93	10,985 98
1897-98	20,963,442 63	517,783 30
1898-99	26,443,847 66	5,480,405 03
1899-1900	27,696,979 06	1,253,131 40

The stamp revenue is a faithful index of the growing business of Mexico. The figures given below for six years show an increase of more than sixty per cent., notwithstanding the fact that last year many important reductions were made in the stamp taxes:—

Fiscal Years.	Stamp Revenue.	Cost of Fees.	Ratio.
1894-95	\$1,553,989 50	\$1,233,119 74	7.93 per cent.
1895-96	18,066,480 46	1,317,375 13	7.29 ,,
1896-97	19,948,271 29	1,316,230 79	6.60 ,,
1897-98	21,621,246 13	1,403,336 49	6.49 ,,
1898-99	23,215,698 77	1,470,656 75	6.33 ,,
1899-1900	24,849,618 78	1,302,867 26	5.24 ,,

The receipts from the Federal telegraph lines and post office department show equally good gains in five years:—

POST OFFICE.			TELEGRAPH LINES.		
1895-96	\$1,062,415 99		1895-96	\$622,340 69	
1896-97	1,195,771 62	I 133,355 63	1886-97	698,103 08	I 75,762 39
1897-98	1,345,062 43	I 149,290 81	1897-98	810,547 53	I 112,444 45
1898-99	1,513,902 19	I 168,839 76	1898-99	980,715 44	I 170,167 91
1899-1900	1,860,105 87	I 346,203 67	1899-1900	887,520 34	I 106,804 90

The following table gives an interesting comparison of the amounts collected from the various branches and the total Government income for a period of five years, the annual revenue for that period having increased to the extent of fourteen million dollars:—

	1895-96	1896-97	1897-98	1898-99	1899-1900
Taxes on Foreign Commerce	\$23,658,692 61	\$23,639,580 91	\$23,284,989 17	\$28,738,480 45	\$29,945,793 04
Interior Taxes Payable in all the Federation	20,418,848 54	21,589,407 27	22,925,702 31	24,595,434 64	26,201,406 14
Interior Taxes Payable in the Federal District and Territories	3,357,611 81	2,705,761 11	2,794,458 41	2,958,555 01	3,280,630 91
Public Services and Minor Sources....	3,086,317 46	3,565,879 46	3,693,834 66	3,846,742 74	4,833,246 30
Total Receipts..	\$50,521,470 42	\$51,500,628 75	\$52,697,984 55	\$60,139,212 84	\$64,261,076 39

	Last Budget Appropriations.	Proposed Expenditure for 1901-1902.	Increase of Expenditure.
Legislature.....	\$1,020,742 65	\$1,020,742 65	
Executive	149,305 52	174,116 09	\$24,810 57
Judiciary	518,286 40	537,488 20	19,201 80
Department of Foreign Relations	594,633 85	671,963 85	77,330 00
Department of the Interior.....	4,438,433 95	4,648,049 00	209,615 05
Department of Justice and Public Education.....}	2,686,030 00	2,781,232 50	95,202 50
Department of Fomento.....	953,484 36	958,686 16	5,201 80
Department of Communications and Public Works.....}	7,467,591 33	8,633,040 45	1,165,419 12
Department of Finance; Ad- ministrative Services	7,047,021 21	7,156,886 85	109,865 64
Public Debt.....	20,432,992 45	21,007,902 45	574,910 00
Department of War and Marine	13,632,374 09	13,987,882 04	355,507 95
Totals	\$58,940,895 81	\$61,577,990 24	\$2,637,094 43

The total estimated receipts of the Government for 1901 amount to \$61,694,000, but owing to the conservative estimates of the secretary, they will doubtless exceed this amount by at least five or six million dollars, as has been the case in former years. The increased receipts of the past few years account for the present Treasury surplus of more than thirty million dollars.

Hon. Ignacio Mariscal is Minister of Foreign Relations. I was introduced to him by Madame Braniff, and although, unfortunately, I did not see as much of him as I could have wished, his personality was striking. He is a man with a remarkably high forehead, deep penetrating eyes, a good linguist, and married to an American.

The other Ministers are:—

Hon. Manuel Fernandez Leal, Minister of Fomento or Encouragement; Manuel Gonzalez Cosio, Minister of Interior; Hon. Joaquin Barranda, Minister of Justice and Education; and General Francisco Mena, Minister of Communications.

General Diaz has certainly been wise in the choice of his Ministers. He is surrounded by able men, who though strong enough to command whole parties, nevertheless work in harmony with the President that built up modern Mexico.

The Government of the Republic is arranged as follows. There are twenty-seven States, ten Territories, and a Federal District :—

Name of States.	Capital.	Area in Square Miles.	Assessed Value.	Population.	Population of Capital.
Aguas Calientes	Aguas Calientes	3,080	\$6,272,375	124,615	31,619
Campuche	Campuche	20,760	1,728,435	92,180	16,631
Coahuila	Saltillo	59,000	7,152,345	241,026	19,654
Colima	Colima	2,700	3,915,724	62,000	19,305
Chiapas	Tuxtla Guitierrez	29,600	4,723,823	319,599	7,882
Chihuahua	Chihuahua	89,200	5,926,728	288,073	40,000
Durango	Durango	42,300	7,727,327	286,906	42,169
Guanajuato	Guanajuato	12,300	31,005,785	1,062,554	90,000
Guerrero	Chilpancingo	22,700	2,125,000	417,621	6,204
Hidalgo	Pachuca	7,600	16,078,924	558,769	52,186
Jalisco	Guadalajara	38,400	24,023,825	1,109,341	125,000
Mexico	Toluca	8,080	22,127,344	841,018	28,643
Michoacan	Morelia	23,000	22,728,416	891,253	32,287
Morelos	Cuernavaca	1,850	17,125,572	159,555	8,504
Nuevo Leon	Monterey	25,000	11,681,323	309,252	56,855
Oaxaca	Oaxaca	28,400	13,127,425	884,909	32,641
Puebla	Puebla	12,600	37,127,591	948,413	91,917
Queretaro	Queretaro	3,800	12,062,345	235,678	50,000
San Luis Potosi	San Luis Potosi	26,100	15,123,727	568,499	80,000
Sinaloa	Culiacan	36,100	5,072,424	258,865	14,205
Sonora	Hermosillo	77,000	7,623,121	191,687	8,367
Tabasco	San Juan Bautista	10,000	4,232,163	134,839	27,036
Tamaulipas	Victoria	29,000	7,828,822	206,502	14,574
Tlaxcala	Tlaxcala	1,500	7,842,924	166,803	2,874
Vera Cruz	Jalapa	23,840	26,232,716	866,355	18,873
Yucatan	Merida	28,400	4,892,516	299,000	36,720
Zacatecas	Zacatecas	25,300	16,989,728	469,000	70,000
Territory of Tepic	Tepic	530	758,542	145,776	7,450
Lower California	La Paz	60,000	4,894,733	43,245	16,226
Federal District	City of Mexico	450	61,124,373	476,413	400,000
Totals		748,590	\$409,318,296	13,325,047	1,447,827

To support the Governments of the various States, there is a system of taxation on all foreign and domestic merchandise, as well as a direct tax on real and personal property. Each State is represented in Congress by two Senators, elected alternately every two years, and by one Member of the Chamber of Deputies for each forty thousand inhabitants.

Over all this rules the great Dictator, General Diaz, whose justice is the guarantee of the nation's stability and peacefulness. He has always used his immense power for his country's good. Long may he live!

CHAPTER IX.

MEXICAN SOCIETY.

THE City of Mexico has been likened to Paris, and in many ways the comparison is good. It is not so bustling as New York, nor yet so sleepy as London. There is the gayest society, the smartest frocks, the prettiest women, but the restaurants are indifferent, and the hotels worse. High civilisation, great refinement, beauty and talent can be found in the Capital itself, yet barbarism exists outside.

There is great wealth in the City, palatial homes where the occupants do not even enjoy the luxury of a want !

Mexican society is very exclusive. The families are wonderfully united, and spend most of their time together, that is to say the women folk, for men have a way of slipping off to the Jockey Club, where they play baccarat, which begins at five o'clock every afternoon, and does not always stop by five next morning.

The day begins with coffee, taken early, in the bedrooms —a custom that enables people to go about in *negligé* attire for the greater part of the forenoon, as in France. This light repast is followed by an enormous mid-day meal, usually served about one o'clock, when soup, fish, *entrees*, meats, puddings, and numerous sweets always appear at table in the better houses. This banquet is the event of the day ; visitors are invited, and sociability ensues. Formerly everyone indulged in a siesta after dinner, indeed, all houses of business are still closed from one to three ; but



Señor Guillermo de Landa y Escandon.

nowadays the siesta itself is going out of fashion, except among servants and the poorer classes.

When the important business of lunching is over, each gentleman offers his arm to a lady, and conducts her back to the drawing-room. Cigarettes follow. Society dames in Mexico scarcely ever smoke ; but among Indian women the habit is universal. Cigarettes in the north, and cigars in the more southern tobacco-growing districts are constantly to be seen.

Many families possess beautiful silver, glass and china, brought from Spain by their ancestors. The dinner-tables, however, are seldom pretty or artistic. The lady of the house usually allows her servants, or someone from the market, to fill her bowls with flowers, which are packed as full as they will hold with blooms of every colour. The result is stiff and inharmonious. They have not yet acquired the art of using one kind of flower, or at most two, interspersed with green trails of foliage.

As regards house decoration, one seldom finds flowers about in this land of beautiful blossoms. Perhaps the Mexicans do not care to have them in their rooms because they die so quickly ; but whatever be the cause, one just as often sees artificial flowers in the drawing-room, as real ones. The prettiest bloom has not always the sweetest scent, just as the softest speech often hides a cruel heart.

After coffee, which is always strong, but generally good, for Mexico is producing excellent coffee nowadays, the visitors depart. It is the custom for the host and hostess to walk to the top of the staircase, where the châtelaine says "good-bye," and the gentleman offers his arm to his lady guest, takes her down to the patio, and puts her into her carriage. I had no carriage, and it was no uncommon thing for the host to send me home in his.

They have a funny arrangement in Mexico for cabs. There are three classes : those bearing yellow flags are the

cheapest ; those decorated with red are of medium price, and consequently most largely patronized ; while others with dark blue bands painted on the body are more like carriages than an ordinary hack for hire in the street.

Society is delightful. The sons of most of the best families have been educated in England—they have been to Stoneyhurst or Belmont between the ages of twelve and eighteen ; some have even been to our Universities. Consequently the sympathy is strong ; indeed, several men looked, dressed, and spoke so much in accordance with English ideas, that it seemed impossible to believe they were Spanish Mexicans.

The love acquired by the men in their youth for England appears constantly ; for instance, the children are often under the care of an English governess, while the small boys are dressed in Jack Tar suits. Then again many of the men get their clothes from London, as their wives do from Paris. The former are beginning to ride on English saddles, to adopt corduroy breeches and high boots, and apparently the death-knell of the native saddle and dress is already tolling.

Not only is English talked by all educated men, but there is scarcely a shop of any importance in this cosmopolitan city where that language is not spoken, and, as has previously been remarked, the railway officials, managers, clerks, and engine-drivers are all English-speaking people. Who will deny that English is fast becoming the language of the world ?

Mexican ladies are often beautiful—the dark Spanish type predominating ; but they are not always good linguists. French is their favourite language, probably from its resemblance to their own, and many of them have been educated at convents in France, as their brothers have at public schools in England. They dearly love chocolate parties. Smart folk dress up in their best,

about five o'clock, and before starting on their twilight drive, enjoy their coffee or chocolate, generally the latter, which is made so thick that the spoon stands upright in the cup if placed in the middle of the brown beverage. It really is delicious, but a little of it goes a long way, and for a nation inclined to embonpoint, is hardly homœopathic in its results. The women have pretty manners, and dress charmingly—everything they wear is the latest fashion—and their politeness and amiability surprise a stranger.

The courtesy of Mexico is wonderful; for instance, at a dinner party a man will hand a glass of wine to a woman, and with a bow, say :—

“Endulcemela,” meaning “Sweeten it for me.” She raises the glass to her lips, and then passes it back for the gentleman to enjoy.

Again, when paying a first call on a friend, I was amazed at the following remark :—

“Ya tomo v posesion de su casa.” “You have now taken possession of *your* home.”

Did he mean he was giving me his house? If so, the situation was a little embarrassing. I smiled a sickly smile, and he repeated “This house is yours.” He did not mean it, he merely implied that for the moment I was to treat his house as my own. If a stranger were to accept such an invitation in its literal meaning, however, and arrive bag and baggage, great would be the dismay of the hostess.

One admires a watch or a cabinet. “It is yours,” is the prompt reply, which means nothing, it is only a figure of speech like “I hope you are quite well.”

In reply to the question “Where do you live?” a Mexican will say :—

“Su Casa de Usted No. 10,” etc., meaning “*Your* house, the house at which you are welcome, is No. 10,” etc.

When writing a letter, instead of putting the address,

they often write C. de V. (Casa de V.) meaning "*Your*" house, or "*my*" house at your disposal.

The Mexican must learn to be parsimonious in promises. He is so generous in thought, he gives away all he has, to draw back in deed!

In spite of great wealth, there is none of that vulgar, ostentatious display of riches which betrays humble origin. Of course there are miserably poor folk in the city as everywhere else; and doubtless there are miserably rich, for although money shuts the door on want, gold alone can never bring happiness.

When anyone sneezes, the company usually call out "*Jesus*," meaning "*Good health to you*." This expression is also used to imply that a man is friendless and knows no one.

It is always said high Mexican families are exclusive, and there is no doubt but that this is the case—even to those bearing good introductions—for they are so taken up with their own affairs that beyond a stately dinner they seldom extend hospitality. They rarely invite foreigners to their homes; but personally I was most fortunate, perhaps because they knew my appreciation of their kindness. I found them charming, well-read, well-educated, pleasant-mannered; in every way cultivated gentlefolk, extremely hospitable and courteous.

It is a pity they do not show this side more often to strangers; but if they will shut themselves up so completely within their own family circle, they must not be surprised if they are misjudged by the outer world so much as they are.

Mexican families are most amiable and united. The better classes own houses which are perfect palaces. In one of them dwells Señor So-and-so with his wife and children; but Madame's mother and sister joined the establishment on the death of Madame's father, and in

addition Señor So-and-So has a mother and brother who make their home with him. This is not the exception, but the rule. I honestly believe that in Mexico City there is no large house which shelters "Papa, Mamma and Baby" alone. There are always some relations on one side, if not on both, included in the family ménage. It says a great deal for their amiability. One portion of the patio may be devoted to the "outside" family, or perhaps a whole floor if the house is large enough; but they all meet at meals, and in no way live apart. Once a bachelor marries and starts a home of his own, it is quickly filled by his relations.

They all seem to agree splendidly; the family life appears to be of the happiest nature. They have their parties and festivities among themselves, their birthday, name-day, and feast-day celebrations; perhaps twenty or thirty members of the family will muster and the following week this will be repeated, and the next, and the next. They are quite contented amongst themselves.

It struck me that little entertaining of a "friendly" kind was enjoyed. Big luncheons and dinners, or nothing, were the fashion. No one apparently ever "drops in." No attempt is made to keep open house.

When invitations are given, the entertainments are costly and well done; but then the usual formality accrues. A couple of friends invited to an ordinary meal seems an unheard-of occurrence among the Spanish aristocracy. In fact I was twice asked *quietly* to luncheon, "just ourselves," and arrived to find a regular banquet and a large party! I was not dressed for a function of the kind, and laughingly remarked:—

"You have asked me under false pretences. You said you would be en famille."

"Yes, but we thought you might find it dull."

The Mexicans so far have not realised that the poorest

morsel offered with love and sympathy is far more welcome than the grandest feast without them ; they only entertain on a great scale.

If a host have two friends he wishes to make known to one another, he says with a wave and a bow :

“ May I introduce a friend ? ”

The friend in question immediately steps forward, and gives his full name to the other stranger, adding, “ Your servant.” The second man does the same, so they really introduce themselves, by which means they can pronounce their names as they like, no small matter in Spanish, where the mother’s name is tacked on with a “ Y ” to the end of every man’s title.

Mexicans are very Latin by temperament. They become wildly enthusiastic over some person or thing which excites their interest for the time ; but they soon weary of the new hobby, and the passion dies out almost as quickly as it was kindled. They are excitable in conversation, gesticulate freely to emphasise their words, and one feels the warm blood of a southern race is tingling in their veins.

They say all manner of delightful things, but of course they never mean them. Pretty compliments fall from their tongues and unspeakable admiration beams from their lovely dark eyes. It is only their way. They promise many things they would never think of performing, all in that beautiful flowery language which is very pleasing, but oh, so misleading ! Of course, I am now speaking of mere acquaintances, people one meets at a ball or a dinner ; once that film of compliment and insincerity is passed, they are true-hearted, kindly friends, as it has been my fortunate lot to find, many, many times. Indeed, I have never met truer hospitality and friendship than among the Spanish Mexicans.

Many of these beautiful homes contain rare old Spanish furniture, bric-à-brac, pictures, things that have been in

the family for generations. Most of them, alas! are stowed away in the nurseries or servants' quarters, while modern French furniture appears in the best rooms. Just the same thing happened lately in England. An old squire died, and when the men were sent to take the probate, they found that one of the Chippendale chairs in the servants' hall was worth all the modern furniture in the dining-room, while the value of the one cupboard, with its queer brass handles, in the children's room, was ten times as much as that of all the modern wardrobes put together. The same thing would apply to Mexico. All the houses are modern French in appearance; but hidden away are countless treasures, the value of which is only just beginning to dawn on the present generation.

The winter is the season for entertaining; then balls and parties are given, and everyone is prepared to enjoy himself. The invitations are generally short, because as everyone is more or less related to everyone else, it is pretty well known when So-and-So's birthday will take place, or when the celebration of some couple's silver wedding will occur.

When Mexicans do open their doors, they are lavish in their hospitality, and their entertainments are regal. On leaving a friend's house after a meal it is, as I said before, by no means unusual for a stranger to be sent home in his carriage, and not only that, but to be positively laden with flowers, hand-painted menu-cards, or boxes of bon-bons.

On one occasion I stepped into a smart little brougham, and turning to my host, said:

"Please tell the gentleman on the box where to drive, and what you wish him to do afterwards."

"John," said my host in English, to my intense amazement, "drive Mrs. Tweedie to the Hotel del Jardin, and when you have done so, come home."

Collapse of Mrs. T.!

There are several interesting little customs in Mexico that strike the stranger.

A man in the United States does not remove his hat on entering an office, while a Mexican invariably does.

When lighting a cigar or cigarette from a friend's, Mexicans always touch little fingers; not to do so would be as rude as to refuse a proffered hand-shake.

The habit for a man to kiss a woman's hand, which exists almost universally in Europe—a courtesy which, however, we omit, alas! in England—does not exist in Mexico. Latin race though they are, the Mexicans never kiss the hands of their women. Sons invariably address their fathers as Sir (*Señor*), and no son or inferior would ever dream of smoking or drinking in the presence of an elder without being invited to do so.

One night after dinner my host asked me if I cared to go to the theatre.

"It is past nine o'clock, we should be too late," I answered.

"Not at all, we can go in for a tanda."

"And what may a tanda be?" I enquired.

"It is an act, or more properly speaking a single little play lasting about three-quarters of an hour."

We went, and it was quite entertaining.

Outside in the hall rows of people were sitting. They were waiting for that act to end, and the next to begin. The stalls hold three or four completely different audiences in one evening. Twenty-five cents (about sixpence) is the price for the tanda, and if a man stay for a second act he must pay again. It was really rather funny. The audience came in shoals, sat down with their hats on, and waited. The moment the curtain went up off came all the hats, only to be put on again at the end of the tanda, when the entire assembly filed out.

The cheapest places in the theatre cost twopence-half-

penny, and were well filled with Indians, while the drop scene was as full of advertisements as a newspaper page.

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MIERCOLES 2

de Enero de 1901.

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Plateas y paleos los con 6 entradas.....	\$6 00
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Para Mañana Jueves

El Dorado

Mexican society is delightful and the Diplomatic corps entertaining and hospitable; for instance, Baron Moncheur, the Belgian Minister, gave charming dinner-parties. His house was full of old cabinets, Spanish fans, bits of embroidery, and curios of all kinds. He was an excellent host, and, amongst others, I met at his table Prince and Princess Charles Poniatowski, Comte de Julvecourt, M. Napoleon Magne, Don Pablo Amor, Senor Nicolas Martinez del Rio, Mr. Lucien Jerome, etc. Prince Poniatowski as a boy used to spend much of his time at Chislehurst with the French Emperor and Empress, and was one of those

who identified the body of Napoleon III. after death. Although he is a Frenchman by birth, his father was the famous Polish composer.

Monsieur Hansen, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, lives in a delightful flat, and gave some of the most interesting dinners I went to in Mexico. He is a brilliant pianist, and possesses a valuable musical library, one so unique indeed that it ought to repose in a museum some day, instead of being scattered as priceless collections too often are.

Monsieur Hansen is one of the most popular men in Mexico, and, although unmarried, is fond of entertaining ladies at his hospitable board.

Unfortunately before I reached Mexico City, our Minister, Sir Henry Deering, and his wife had left for the former's new post at Rio Janeiro. This was sad, as Sir Henry was keenly interested in Mexico, and had kindly planned trips for me, and done much to persuade me to write a book on the Republic, when we were staying at a large country-house in England during the previous year. He, however, gave me some useful introductions, for which I was most grateful.

The new English Minister, Mr. Greville, only arrived some months later, not in fact until the very day I left for home. At the time of my visit England was therefore represented by a Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Fairfax Cartwright, but as he was of a retiring nature, English people were entertained by the Consul, Lucien Jerome, the son of General Jerome, V.C., a distinguished officer who fought in the Indian Mutiny. Mr. Jerome and his beautiful wife did much for the amusement and pleasure of the English residents, ably helped by Mrs. Colley, a smart, Australian cousin, who spent the winter with them.

There is no doubt about it—for the sake of a country its representatives ought always to entertain. Then again they must be the pick of the nation. Socially and morally

the diplomatic corps which represents its country should be above suspicion, and able to maintain a dignified position in foreign lands. Nothing is worse for a nation than a bad representative—a man (or his wife), whom people do not want to know, or who do not trouble to entertain those among whom they have come to stay. Such instances are bad for society, bad for diplomacy, and bad for commercial interests.

The American Ambassador, General Clayton, kept open house on Friday afternoons, and a regular reception was the result.

There are several charming people in the diplomatic circle in Mexico, the chief leaders of society there being represented by Germany, America, Russia and Belgium.

The German Minister and Baroness von Heyking entertain considerably. He was consul and diplomatic agent at Calcutta, India, and Cairo before going as minister to China, and during Baroness von Heyking's residence in those countries, she used her opportunities and taste in making a collection of characteristic objects of art. Thus her Mexican home is embellished with the rugs of Persia and India, tapestries from the mosques of Egypt, bronze lamps elaborately wrought, from the pagodas of China, and gilded statues of Buddha from the temples of Japan. The walls of the staircase are hung with water colours painted by the Baroness in China, which are of special interest now, for some of the buildings which they represent were destroyed during the siege of the legations. For example one piece depicts a corner of the building occupied by the German Legation at Pekin, which during the siege was wrecked by a shell. There is another view from the famous walls of the city which represents the imperial palaces with their yellow roofs and the sacred gate through which the Emperor alone is allowed to pass. All these water colours were exhibited in Berlin.

Germany, ever to the fore, has sent a charming military representative, Lieutenant Bartols, to study military organisation and methods. One would hardly think Germany could learn much from Mexico, but therein lies the cleverness. The Fatherland wants to know everything, and this is merely a part of the great system, behind which so much lies. England, whose interests in Mexico are considerably greater, does nothing of the kind. We do not send people anywhere—not even to the Transvaal in olden days—to make maps, survey the land and study possible warfare. Oh dear no, we do not trouble ourselves until it is too late, and then we wonder that the maps are not there!

Among the many Mexican families who kindly offered me hospitality, none were more gracious or more interesting than Señor Guillermo de Landa y Escandon. He is the leader of Society, and holding as he does several public posts as well as being descended from the Escandon family, in addition to being a wealthy man, his entertainments are always well attended, and much appreciated. No one in Mexico has the interests of the country more at heart, and there is no finer, more courtly gentleman or stauncher friend throughout the land.

He has a charming country house a little outside the City, where I remember being present at one particularly interesting luncheon. He and his lovely wife were waiting for us outside the Cathedral in a special electric tramcar, which bore us in less than an hour to one of his many rural homes. Unfortunately, the President was not well, and at the last moment he and Madame Diaz excused themselves, but we were nevertheless a party of twenty-two. Many members of the diplomatic circle were there, including—

General and Mrs. Clayton, representing the United States.

Baron and Baroness von Heyking, representing Germany.

Baron Moncheur, representing Belgium.

Monsieur Hansen, representing Russia.

Señor José Limantour, Minister of Finance, with his wife and daughter.

General Mena, Minister of Communications.

General Reyes, Minister of War.

Señor Ignacio Mariscal, Minister of Foreign Relations.

Mr. Lucien Jerome, the English Consul, and his delightful wife.

In fact, Captain Barrow, the leader of the English Society, Mr. Stanhope (Lord Chesterfield's brother), and I were the only people who represented nothing!

Señor Camacho, the Banker, is another great entertainer, and one of my most pleasant recollections is a charming luncheon at his lovely house. We were a party of twenty, and in truly Mexican fashion sat down to table shortly after one o'clock, and did not rise till nearly four! He had courteously ordered a number of Mexican dishes, knowing I liked to try them, and really some were excellent, notably Mole, which is called the "national dish" of the country. It is hardly that, however, since turkey is too expensive for the ordinary peon. The turkey is served with a rich chilli sauce, which is hot—too hot for most mortals, though, when partaken of sparingly, delicious.

Señor Camacho is one of the most successful men of Mexico; he has acquired an influential and wealthy position, and, although he talks English, he has never been outside Mexico in his life. Among his guests on this occasion were the Hon. John W. Foster, of Washington, and his wife. Mr. Foster was, for many years, the United States Minister to Mexico; it was he—owing to his ability as a lawyer—who concluded the Peace Treaty between China and Japan. He is one of the most popular and best known men in the United States.

Mr. Foster was able to give me good news of Colonel

John Hay, whom I had seen a few months previously in Washington, thus renewing a pleasant acquaintance begun when Colonel Hay represented his country so ably in London. What tremendous strides in the position of nations the United States have made while he has been Secretary of State.

Señor Pablo Martinez del Rio, the greatest lawyer and legal representative of most of the railway lines in Mexico, entertained me most kindly. Señor del Rio speaks English as perfectly as any Englishman. Like so many of his friends, he was educated at one of our Catholic Colleges, and certainly acquired the language without the slightest accent. It seems impossible to believe our tongue was once a foreign language to him ; but he is almost equally at home with French or German. Don Pablo is a refined and courteous gentleman, a successful lawyer, a rich man, and he and his charming wife reign over one of the most popular houses in Mexico.

Every traveller must have noticed, when he has been in a foreign land, that if the day chances to be fine and he remarks on the fact, the native instantly replies :—

“ We always have weather like this.”

If, on the other hand, it is wet, cold or foggy, and he ventures to express a mild surprise, some native is sure to remark :

“ Most unusual, we never had such weather before. I don’t remember anything like it.”

Such was my experience in Mexico City. All through the first half of December it rained, rained hard, and the wind blew, but no one ever recollects such a deluge previously. Nevertheless, I can solemnly affirm we had *nine wet days* in the month. Not a little wet, oh ! dear no ; but regular downpours, rain that dripped in through the roof, and flooded the streets, until it necessitated paying a man to carry one across the principal thoroughfares.

Then on February 17th, 1901, it snowed—think of it, snowed! and again no one could call to mind having experienced such weather. On this occasion their remarks were true enough, for it had not snowed for forty-five years. The paper gave the following:—

A RARE PHENOMENON.

SNOW IN THE CITY FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR HALF A CENTURY.

Snow fell in this city yesterday morning, between five and six o'clock, melting as it came down. Only early risers saw this strange northern visitor. But out in the south-western suburbs of Mixcoac, San Angel, Coyoacan, and Tlalpam, there was a genuine snow-storm, and the tropical plants and trees were mantled in purest white, the display lasting about two hours. The sight of the snow-laden trees and plants in the south-western suburbs yesterday morning will not be forgotten. Children went out and gathered snow in all kinds of receptacles, and were puzzled at its prompt disappearance.

The great and historic snow-storm in this city occurred on the evening of the 16th December, 1856, when it snowed all night. People coming out of the theatres found the streets white with quite deep snow, and in some cases the roofs of the houses, unable to bear the weight, fell in! The people were early abroad, and thousands went to the Alameda to see the effect of the snow on the trees. During the forenoon there was snowballing, and much amusement was found in this meteorological novelty by the people. Thus until yesterday there had been no snow seen here for forty-five years.

The snow must be forgiven, for it lay on all the high mountains and surrounding hills quite deep into the valleys for days, and made the panorama even more beautiful than usual.

Among the many interesting people I met in Society were Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Maudslay. It so chanced they were passing through Mexico during my stay there. He lent me his wonderful book, "A Glimpse of Guatemala," wonderful because, besides containing interesting information concerning the Ancient Monuments of Central America, it has some really beautiful illustrations. They are pictures, not photographs, and add considerably to the value and charm of the volume. Mr. Maudslay is a bright, clever, enthusiastic traveller, and notwithstanding his love of antiquarian research, has some interest in mining. But who in Mexico has not some interest in mining?

The City of Mexico possesses a Women's Club for

English-speaking members. They did me the honour of giving a reception on my behalf. It was not so grand as the magnificent luncheon of Sorosis at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, at which I had been a guest a few months previously, nor on so large a scale as the Fort-nightly or Women's Club in Chicago, but it was none the less hearty and genial. It says much for the women, mostly Americans, that they should have organised this little Club. It is in no wise political, merely social, and holds monthly meetings on literature, plilanthropy, science, and art.

They had excellent music ; native instruments and selections being chosen for my special gratification. The "bandolon" is the chief instrument of the country, and is a sort of guitar. The "Jarabe," one of the prettiest of the Mexican dances, sounded delightful. Of course, one of the musicians was blind ; they always are in that country !

One word about cakes. The most delicious confectionery of every sort and kind appeared at that tea-party, and I wondered where on earth they all came from, as there are no real cake shops in Mexico.

"The ladies made them themselves," I was informed.

This was a delightful piece of news, and the American women are to be congratulated upon the result. How pleasant it is to find clubwomen ever ready and able to turn their hand to any and every thing.



Type of Mexican.

CHAPTER X.

A GLANCE AT MEXICAN HISTORY.

THE more one reads, the less one seems to understand the history of ancient Mexico. It is all shrouded in mystery. Every historian has his own particular theory, but no two agree; wherein, perhaps, lies its charm. Only one fact appears certain, namely, that Mexico and her people are very, very old. How old? Ah! who can say?

Even I, unlearned though I am in such matters, could not fail to be struck, again and again, with the similarity in things Mexican with those of Egypt and China.

Many of the pyramids, idols, statues and often the inhabitants themselves, are distinctly Egyptian in character. Again, the jade beads dug up amid Aztec remains probably had their origin in China, the nearest point where such jade is found. The bronze figure exhumed in the old tomb at Oaxaca, is undoubtedly Chinese, and many of the ancient coins and some of the types of modern Indians clearly reproduce Mongolian types.

The more one reads, the more bewildered one becomes. Where did those Toltecs, Aztecs and Zapotecs originally come from? Is it three, four, or five thousand years since they first arrived on Mexican soil?

Some writers have assumed a continuous chain of islands between the east and the west? Others suggest lines of communication by way of Egypt across Northern Africa,

the Canary Islands, and the lost Atlantis. In that case the distances would not have been very great, and open boats might easily have accomplished the different voyages. Open boats did wondrous things in days of old.

Or again, might not Mexico have been in communication with China? There are the Sandwich Islands, the Philippines, and Japan, may there not have been other groups, that have disappeared owing to volcanic eruption, formerly so rife in Mexico and Japan?

In any case ancient Mexican architecture closely resembles that of Japan, which seems one proof the more that there may formerly have been some connection between the two countries.

All writers appear agreed that the Toltecs were the earliest people of Mexico; how far back they go no one knows, though some authorities affirm about five thousand years. Prescott, however, says:

	A.D.
The Toltecs arrived in Anahuac	648
They abandoned the country	1051
The Chichemecs arrived	1170
The Alcolhuans arrived about	1200
The Mexicans reached Tula	1196
They founded Mexico City	1325
Cortés conquered Mexico, which was annexed by Charles V. of Spain	1519
Declaration of Independence of Mexico	1813

The Toltecs were a highly cultured people. The names they gave to districts and towns remain to-day in Mexico. They had two written languages, one used when addressing superiors, the other for the vulgar, as in Java and Cambodia. Castes are purely Asiatic, but they existed among the Toltecs, which again shows their connection with some outside influence. These Toltecs had their priests, warriors, merchants and tillers of the soil,

whilst land was held in common, and a feudal system is apparent with both the Toltecs and the Malays.

" Finally the worship of serpents as gods of wisdom, like Quetzalcoatl, is found in India, Greece, China, Japan, and particularly in Cambodia and Java. To us these points of resemblance are more than mere coincidences, something better than fortuitous analogies; they seem to point to a vast and novel field for the investigation of archeologists."*

I was particularly struck by a fact which has hitherto escaped the notice of writers.

The Toltecs gave wonderful advice to their brides, detailed at some length in Charnay's book, and strangely enough that advice, and the form in which it is given, resemble the ancient Finnish warnings in that wonderful epic poem, the *Kalevala*, which until 1835, was handed down only by word of mouth, although the greater part of it is pre-Christian.†

The Finnlanders are Tartar Mongolians. It may be a far-fetched idea, but is it not possible that those Tartar Mongolians of Finland sprang from the same Chinese branch a resemblance to which is so often found in Mexico? The warning to the bride is certainly similar.

Little is really known of Toltec civilisation, which dates probably from the sixth to the fourteenth century, except that as regards religion they were mild and temperate. No human blood ever stained their altars. Little is known probably because the Aztecs who followed them, and retained much of their learning and art, became so powerful that they have left traces of their influence everywhere, in which the Toltec civilisation is merged. These Aztecs or Mexicans, although more civilised, were, unlike the original milder race of Toltecs, a cruel people.

The Aztecs succeeded after many hardships in finding a

* "Ancient Cities of the New World" (Preface), by Desiré de Charnay.

† "Through Finland in Carts," by Mrs. Alec Tweedie.

resting place on the muddy islands of one of the lakes, established themselves, and founded Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) in 1325. Here they raised a temple to their god Huitzilopochtli, to whom they frequently offered human sacrifices, on one occasion, it is said, a Royal Princess being the victim!

Human sacrifice was a matter of daily occurrence among the Aztecs. Historians have described at length terrifying scenes of brutal murder. It is difficult to reconcile such revolting usages with a people that had made great strides in civilisation.

The Aztecs were cannibals—not in the coarsest sense. They did not feed on human flesh to gratify their appetites, but under the influence of the priest at religious ceremonials. The body of a victim was delivered to the warrior who had slain it in battle, and after being dressed for table, served up at a great entertainment to the conqueror's friends. Members of both sexes attended these banquets, which were often regal and otherwise civilised in character. The best of viands and delicious beverages were served. Refinement and barbarism seem to have walked hand in hand in Mexico during the days of the Aztecs, as indeed they do to-day. The skulls of human victims were preserved and in one of their edifices Cortés, when he conquered Mexico, counted one hundred and thirty-six thousand !

Yet these people recognised the existence of a supreme Creator and Lord of the Universe. They addressed Him in their prayers as "The God by whom we live," "omnipresent, that knoweth all thoughts and giveth all gifts," "without whom man is as nothing, invisible, incorporeal, one God of *perfect perfection* and purity, under whose wings we find repose and sure defence."

Prescott says:—

“They imagined three separate states of existence in the future life. The wicked, comprehending the greater part of mankind, were to expiate their sins in a place of everlasting darkness. Another class with no merit than having died of certain diseases capriciously selected, were to enjoy a negative existence of indolent contentment. The highest place was reserved, as in most warlike nations, for the heroes who fell in battle, or in sacrifice. They passed at once into the presence of the Sun, whom they accompanied, with songs and choral dances, in his bright progress through the heavens, and after some years, their spirits went to animate the clouds and singing birds of beautiful plumage, and to revel among the rich blossoms and odours of the gardens of Paradise. Such was the heaven of the Aztecs; more refined in its character than that of the more polished pagan, whose Elysium reflected only the martial sports, or sensual gratifications, of his life.”

Their law of succession was curious; a king was supposed to rule for fifty-two years (their cycle), and then resign in favour of his son; in fact a regency became necessary.

They worshipped an unknown God, but their principal deities were the Sun and the Moon, to which they raised wonderful pyramids, and “Tonacatecuhtli,” in whose honour various temples were erected.

Prescott’s “History of Mexico” reads like a romance, and we only regret it goes no farther than the death of Cortés, for no such charming writer has arisen to chronicle the history of the country during the last three hundred and fifty years.

When the Aztecs established themselves on the borders of the Lake, they noticed a large eagle, its wings open to the rising sun, perched on the stem of a prickly pear holding a serpent in its talons. This they thought a favourable omen, and determined to build their city on the spot, calling it *Tenochtitlan*, which city is now known by the name of Mexico, derived from the war-god *Mexitli*. The devices of the eagle and the cactus form the arms of Mexico to-day, and a similar device is reproduced on the cover of this volume, whereon are also depicted the subsequent arms granted by Charles V. of Spain when he annexed the country in 1523, and the still later badge adopted by the Mexican Republic in 1821.

The history of the Aztecs suggests some strong points of resemblance to that of the ancient Romans, not only in their military successes, but in the policy which led to them. As with the ancient Romans, military success was their greatest triumph, their Ruler being chosen on account of his victories. He was crowned in great pomp ; his regal headgear was in the shape of a mitre decorated with gold, gems and feathers, and was placed on his head by one of his royal allies. In the earliest times the ruler was styled King, later he was called Emperor, and lived with great splendour in magnificent palaces, where the monarch was aided by nobles in his various councils, the chief of which was a sort of privy council.

One prominent characteristic of the Aztec code related to slavery, which was a very intricate affair, and led to many complications.

Various indeed are the eccentric theories about the ancient Mexican people ; for instance, Lord Kingsborough's great book, with its wonderful illustrations, is written to prove that the ancient Mexicans were descended from the ten tribes of Israel.

With more fatuity Dr. Augustus Le Plongeon declares he has proofs that Yucatan in Southern Mexico was the Garden of Eden, and original home of Adam. He discovered the grave of Abel, the charred heart of the victim, and the knife used by Cain in that deadly conflict !

All this is but an *Augenblick*, as our German friends would say, of the country and its people when Cortés landed in 1519. Spain, when Charles V. ascended the throne three years before, occupied the first position in Europe, to which it had attained under Ferdinand and Isabella ; but Charles was almost a foreigner to Spain, and the great colonisation, begun in America at Cuba, waned under his rule. Hernando Cortés, born 1485, was the man to set all to rights, and after visiting Cuba and

Havanna, he landed in Mexico. He knew no Aztec, however, and consequently could only communicate with the natives by signs. He came across a wonderful girl, a young slave given to him by a Tabascan chief. She was a Mexican, and the Spaniards called her *Marina*. There was a certain romance in her early life, for when, after her father, a rich and powerful cacique, died, her mother married again and had a son, the mother determined to secure her daughter's inheritance for him, by saying *Marina* was dead. She therefore sold her for a slave, and represented the dead body of one of her bondmaidens as being the corpse of her daughter!

The girl's native language was Mexican, but having learnt various dialects during her residence in Tabasco, she was able indirectly to communicate with *Cortés*. Ultimately he became so infatuated by her beauty, that he made her his mistress. Her knowledge of the language and customs of Mexico often extricated the Spaniards from great difficulties and perilous situations.

From her, *Cortés* heard of the powerful Mexican ruler called *Moctheuzoma*, or by the Europeans *Montezuma*, who lived in what is now Mexico City in great state. *Cortés* informed the Indians that his purpose in visiting the country was friendly, and expressed a desire to see the Aztec governor, but although the latter received him kindly, his followers continued hostile, and riots were numerous among the soldiers.

It is difficult to understand *Cortés*' reason for the step he finally decided to take, namely, destroying his fleet and thus cutting off all communication with his friends and allies at home. Probably, however, it was a wise move, for in the end, partly owing to *Marina*, who enlarged upon the greatness and splendour of the Spaniards to *Montezuma*, *Cortés* conquered and marched triumphantly on to success, and, with only a handful of followers, annexed the country

Spain retained as one of her richest possessions for three centuries.

Much of this success was undoubtedly due to the horses. A cavalry charge seems imposing even when only made by sixteen animals, provided anything so strange as a horse has never been seen before! The Spanish quadrupeds frightened the Mexicans, and no doubt secured victory.

The description given by various writers of the reception of Cortés by Montezuma is most graphic, and it seems almost incredible to realise its magnificence. One reads that seven thousand Aztecs in gorgeous apparel, feather-bedecked, marched to meet the Spaniards; in their midst Montezuma was carried in his robes of state glittering with jewels, especially prominent being the *chalchivitl*, a green stone held in higher estimation by the Aztecs than any other.

When Cortés and his followers entered the city, they were amazed at its grandeur, palaces abounded, and long rows of magnificent streets met their gaze on every side. What astonished them most, perhaps, was the vast concourse of people; crowds seemed to swarm everywhere, lined the side-walks, and assembled even in numbers on the housetops.

There was long continued hostility, but little by little Cortés vanquished his enemies, till Montezuma acknowledged himself a feudatory of Spain. His career had hitherto been a glorious one, but at the early age of forty-one he died dethroned. His life was a marvellous example of how even the greatest may fall.

There is a curious old parchment in the Mexican archives describing the first Council held in the City of Mexico on Monday, March 6th, 1524, after the conquest by Spain.

Cortés is described therein as the "Governor and Captain of this New Spain." His signature, or rather initials, are several times affixed. The document so signed chiefly



[*Two faces page 168.*

Mexican types.



relates to the disposal of land, or petitions for its purchase. Then come schedules of prices to be fixed for further reference on such articles as nails, forks, spoons, saws, hammers, chains, scissors, tables, etc. ; followed by stated wages for carpenters and other labourers. The ink is faded, and the writing reminded me strangely of Shakespeare's will at Somerset House, which was written much about the same time. The lettering is similar, although the one is penned in English, and the other in Spanish!

There are also several interesting curiosities in the archives, kindly shown me by the Federal Governor and Mayor of the town, Señor Guillermo de Landa y Escandon, who is such an enthusiast concerning the history of his country. The public buildings of Mexico are handsome, especially the National Palace, but descriptions of such pertain to guide books, and therefore are outside the scope of this story of travel.

More or less peaceable times followed Cortés' triumph. During the centuries of Spanish sway, things went pretty well, but the country did not develop. Wars with America, troubles with France, all followed in their turn.

Revolutions marked the 18th and 19th centuries, and might still be rife, but for that wonderful man General Diaz, who rose from the people apparently to quell insurrection, to stop bloodshed, and institute law and order.

With his advent ancient Mexico died, and modern Mexico was born!

Professor Frederick Starr of Chicago, whom I had the pleasure of meeting, has been working for years among the Indian tribes of Mexico, but even he has formed no definite conclusion as to their origin. Our meeting was followed by a strange coincidence. Seeing from the paper he was in the city, I sent my card and temporary address, saying I should be glad if he would call upon me. He came; I was much impressed by his enthusiasm—it is

enthusiasm that accomplishes everything—and while we were chatting, some letters were laid upon the table.

When he had taken his departure, the first envelope I opened was one written twenty days previously, by our mutual friend, Edward Clodd, the well-known author of "The Childhood of the World." It ran as follows :

Savile Club, London,
7th December, 1900.

My dear Mrs. Tweedie,

When dining at a certain hospitable house a few evenings ago, memory, which advancing years has sadly impaired, looked back, or was jolted back, to some promise made to you as to a note of introduction to Professor Starr of Chicago, and, very often, of Mexico. If the beneficent spirits bring you into touch with that eminent authority on all matters of Mexican origin, will you please express to him the pleasure which his far too brief visit to London gave myself and other members of the Folk Lore Society, and tell him that the debt which I then incurred, can, in large degree, be liquidated by the pleasure he will derive from knowing you, and doing all that is in his power—and that is a good deal—to enlarge your knowledge of the old faith and folk lore of Mexico. I know that he spends, or has spent, a large portion of each year in that country, and that you will have little trouble in learning if he is in Mexico, or at his home in Chicago.

I found Mrs. Harley and Olga quite well. The latter, I grieve to say, referred in tones which were nothing else than jeering to your study of Spanish ; indeed, she had a large stock of Ollendorfian phrases with the irrelevant use of which she credited you when you make your bow to the President. It would greatly rejoice her sisterly heart to hear that instead of saluting him "Buenos dios," you turned over the wrong page and said "Tiene usted suelto ?" But I turn from a painful theme which candour alone compels me to name, to say that I had the privilege of having some passages from your letters read to me. They were very bright, good talk, as letters should be, and put before one, in a few rapid touches, your surroundings and impressions. I like your phrases. Central America you'll no doubt find full of charm, for there stand the mysterious Ruins out of which Le Plongeon extracted perhaps the most fatuous theories that antiquarian ever formulated.

We are having hideous weather here. Your beloved London is in the hands of the telephone men, who are cutting huge channels along the big streets, and flinging the soil on the roadway so that the rain may convert it into chronic deliquescence. I am revelling in Huxley's *Life*, which is very well done by his eldest son. *Punch* gave you a most flattering notice last week in reviewing the new edition of the Finland Book.

If I dreamed that this scrawl might cause you to think that I expected a line in return, I should hesitate to send it. Writing is a bore when one is away, so I shall hope in due time to hear *viva voce* that you have seen the Starr in the West.

Yours sincerely,
EDWARD CLODD.

Professor Starr's book, entitled " Indians of Southern Mexico," contains beautiful illustrations of tribal traits. He

takes photographs, measurements and clay models, and is making a marvellous collection of the characteristics of the different tribes. He says there are one hundred and fifty different languages—seventy-five are actually written down—to say nothing of the numerous dialects.

He adds the Aztecs, of whom there are half a million to-day, are a great people. It was their ancestors who erected the Xochicalco fortress, which I visited later.

The Mixtecs have numerous dialects, and are most artistic, particularly in pottery ware. A woman of this tribe was the grandmother of General Diaz, the President of Mexico.

The Zapotecs are a wonderful tribe; their women are exceptionally handsome. They have a curious way of building their houses on poles in mud. Formerly the Zapotecs and Aztecs were constantly at war. These Zapotecs built the famous fortress of Mitla. They inhabit the whole State of Oaxaca as far down as Tehuantepec.

The Otomi, almost the oldest people in Mexico, are said to be dull and stupid.

The Tlaxcalans are a superior type, and were famous in history. The success of Cortés was largely due to their assistance.

The Juaves who are supposed to have come from Peru, still go about naked, as do several other tribes, although the law forbids their entering towns unless clothed.

By the Government Statistics we learn that five-twelfths of the entire population is Indian, that is, almost half!

Although there are so many tribes, and so many languages, yet the *tortilla* (Aztec *tlaxcal*—bread ground from Indian corn) is the universal food amongst them all. *Tamales*, a sort of dumpling made from corn and wrapped in a corn husk, is almost as popular and universal.

Returning to history, few persons realise that several

Englishmen were burned to death in Mexico during the Inquisition introduced there by Cortés.

There have been so many stories about the Inquisition one hesitates to add to their number. The subject, however, has always excited interest and been the cause of passion and exaggeration, therefore it is an important factor in history which must be alluded to. It is without any bias against the Roman Catholic Church that this short sketch is written.

“Offences” against the Church were not at that time the only matters of which the Holy Office took cognizance. Bigamy and laxity of morals both among the clergy and laity, were punished, or to be more correct, “condemned” by zealous ecclesiastics ; the sentences being carried out by the civil or lay authorities represented by an official rejoicing in the name of a *Corregidor*.

The extraordinary want of logic which throughout characterised the proceedings of this Tribunal—often using brutal and barbarous methods to inculcate the doctrines of the gentle Nazarene—is well exemplified in the case of an Aztec Indian victim, who in 1539 was burnt alive as a punishment for having *made human sacrifices to his God!* This man, as well as many other natives, must have found it difficult to distinguish the difference between a human sacrifice to Tezcat, and an Auto-da-Fé of which he himself was a victim. The pomp and circumstances surrounding the latter, accompanied as they were by all kinds of religious ceremonies—the victims dressed out in their *Sambenitos*—a garb of infamy—the presence of Civil, Military and Ecclesiastical authorities, the chanting of Litanies and Psalms, procession of Nuns and Monks—must have conveyed the impression to the Indians that they were assisting at a sacrifice to the God of their Conquerors.

Indeed, in this respect, but for the actual number of the victims, Mexico seems to have gained little by the conquest of Cortés during the years that the Spanish Domina-

tion lasted. For in the great Cathedral square the sacrifices of the Aztecs were continued in the form of Auto-da-Fés by the *Illustrissimo Senores Inquisidores*.

Don Luis Obregon, in the second volume of his interesting "Sketches of Old Mexico," compiled from carefully obtained data, makes the following computation: From the institution of the Inquisition to the final overthrow of Spanish power in Mexico, "790 persons were *reconciled* to the Church by means of the Holy Office"; that is to say, were not strangled or burnt. It does not mean they escaped torture, imprisonment in the mines, being sold into slavery, or other punishment according to the extent of their heresy or the degree of the crime of which they were accused. Fifty-one persons were actually put to death by strangulation or burned at the stake, and 109 were burnt in effigy. Regarding these last, it is more than probable that they themselves succumbed to the treatment received in their secret prisons at the hands of the Inquisitors.

Adventurous beings who, even so early as the middle of the sixteenth century, searched for fortune in Mexico, did not always escape from the clutches of the Santo Oficio as established in the Valley of Anahuac.

In looking through the list of names, copied by Father Joseph Picardo, of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, from the Sambenitos on which they were inscribed, we find that in 1560, in the Cathedral of Mexico, by order of His Grace Alonzo de Montufar, second Archbishop of Mexico, in a *private* Auto-da-Fé, the first of the Englishmen, named John, was "*reconciled*" to the Church.

On February 28th, 1574, what is known as the first Auto-da-Fé in Mexico—probably because it was the first to take place under the auspices of a duly organised Inquisition—was held with great pomp and ceremony in what is now the Zocalo, or great Plaza to the south of the Cathedral. Special arrangements were made for the pro-

cession of the victims, who were dressed in yellow Sambenitos, on the back and front of which red crosses were painted. An eye-witness relates "the poor heretics were not allowed to sleep owing to the preparations. Twenty-one pestilent Lutherans met their death by fire (brazero) on a pile of stones (quemadaro)" in what is now a public square, near which, at the back of the Cathedral, so many Aztec treasures have lately been dug up.

The tribunal of the Holy Office was then lodged in what is now the School of Medicine; the heretics proceeded from thence through the Plaza de Santo Domingo—in the Church of which is the strange life-sized wooden Christ in bed—to the Cathedral Square. So great was the concourse of spectators that the mounted minions of the Inquisitors had much difficulty in forcing their way through the crowd.

Large sums were spent in preparing the Zocalo for the event. All the authorities were invited. The Viceroy, Don Martin Enriquez de Almanza, and his Council were on the platform with the Inquisitors Don Pedro Moya de Contreras and Don Alonso Fernandez de Bonilla, all in gala costume. A sermon was addressed to the audience and principal actors in the drama by the Bishop of Tlaxala. Five Protestants were put to death and 73 sentenced for various offences, polygamy, necromancy, the performance of Jewish rites—Jews being particular objects of persecution. The banishment of the Jews and Moors by royal order in 1527 really began the Inquisition.

On the day above mentioned, among those burnt at the stake for their fortitude in their religious opinions, we find John Ribley, a native of "Desambra" (Dewsbury ?), Peter Momfrie, and William Cornelius, the latter a native of Cork. The following English names appear among the "reconciled" :—

Williams, a native of Bristol.
Philip Miles, a native of London.
John Wrenington, of Windsor.
Morgan Tillert, a Welshman.
William Gollan, of Axnart (?).
John Lee of Sebria (?).
John Cree, of London.
William Grifon, of Gloucester.

John Gullens, of Bristol.
John of Mun, of Hutton-Loo.
John Breton, a carpenter, of Derby.
John Brown, of Thurles, in Ireland.
John Evans, of the city of Griego (?).
John Evren, of Bristol, and
Robert Pliton, of Plymouth.

These names were kindly supplied by Mr. Lucien Jerome, England's able Consul. The Inquisition was only suppressed in 1813, when the tablets bearing the names of the victims were removed from the Cathedrals.

All this seems very terrible, and yet we must remember that in those days much the same thing was going on in Europe in the name of religion!

CHAPTER XI.

IS A BULL-FIGHT CRUEL?

THE ordinary Sunday afternoon entertainment in Mexico is either a cock or bull-fight. Ladies seldom attend either, but the people dearly love both, and children—boys and girls of five and seven years old—are taken to applaud or hiss, as their baby minds incline. Of course they grow up to think such sport—or barbarity—the acme of bliss. It is in their blood, and it will be many a long day before the populace learns otherwise.

“Would you go to a bull-fight?” I was asked one day.

“Certainly. I wish to see the national sport of the country, the ring, the crowd, everything; but whether I shall like it or not remains to be seen.”

In accordance with which statement, after lunching with Captain Barron, a well-known Englishman living in Mexico City, our party drove off behind a splendid pair of horses, and a smart English coachman, to a box at the Plaza de Toros.

It would be difficult to say what my feelings were as we neared the famous ring; I wanted to see a bull-fight, and yet I almost feared to do so, since dreadful scenes are sometimes enacted thereat.

Vendors of oranges, nuts, tortillas, and other forms of food, lined the roadway; boys and men rushed at every passer-by, trying to sell tickets, “sol,” or “sombra,” *i.e.*, the sunny or shady side of the ring, and a general air of



Matadors in front—mounted Picadores behind.



Entrance of procession for the bull fight.

festivity pervaded the scene, on which frowned two grand sedate old volcanoes, from the summits of which snow had descended far down into the valley, owing to the extraordinary coldness of the weather.

Crowds thronged the thoroughfare ; electric trams, and others drawn by mules, kept constantly arriving, with passengers standing down the centre of the cars, or hanging like flies to the outside platforms. Carriages, carts, vans, everything was there, all the occupants eager for the fray.

As we alighted in front of a primitive sort of entrance, without a turnstile, and so narrow that there was barely room for an ordinary person to squeeze through the barrier, my host exclaimed, "Here we are." At the same time he showed his flaming yellow ticket, for Box 22, containing eight seats, each one being marked and perforated separately, so that it could be torn off, and the occupants come in and out as they pleased.

The ring resembled an enormous circus, probably some hundred feet in diameter. In the centre was a sanded space for the bull-fight, encircled by a wooden barrier six feet high, over which the men jumped—to escape Mr. Bull in wild pursuit—with the greatest agility and grace. There was a second barrier beyond, behind which the spectators took their seats, that rose tier after tier, culminating in the boxes at the top of the arena.

"Could any bull really jump out of the ring ?" I asked, amazed at the place.

"Certainly," was the reply, and sure enough bull No. 2, later in the afternoon, jumped the barrier, not only once, but three times. Up started the sightseers just above the beast, each thinking he would be gored, but the bull was quickly back in the ring again. At intervals round this passage-way—really made for the safety of the bull-fighters—were swinging-doors, and the moment the animal jumped over the barrier, the doors before and

behind him were closed, and another was opened on to the ring, through which he was driven back to fight the game to the bitter end.

We arrived early, that I might see the arena properly. On our left was the President's box—not the President of Mexico, but the President of bull-fights, one of the municipal authorities sent to represent law and order, and settle public disturbances, which are by no means uncommon on those exciting occasions. His entrance was the signal for the band to strike up, and it continued to play at intervals during the performance.

Below the President was a chair on another daïs, for the "Torero"—an old and experienced bull-fighter who acts as umpire, decides when a bugle shall be sounded for the horse to be taken out, or when the matador shall come forward to kill the bull. The Torero, therefore, is a very important personage. Below him was a doorway for the use of men and horses taking part in the entertainment.

Opposite to the President was another large doorway, through which the procession entered. It may be well to remark here, that soldiers were stationed everywhere; an entire regiment seemed to be present, for between the spectators, at frequent intervals, one caught the glint of a gun, and not infrequently their services are called into requisition, for nothing excites a Mexican more than his national game, and disturbances often occur.

There are several performers in a bull-ring.

The *Capeadores* wave their cloaks in front of the bull to excite him, or to distract his attention as he rushes wildly after some one. They are dressed in beautiful costumes of varied colours, with gold or silver embroideries, and wear those queer black hats and pig-tails we know from pictures. Their cloaks of silk are seldom red, but rather of other colours, with brighter linings, and their dexterity is delightful to witness. Everything the capeador does is



Picador and blindfolded horse.



A brilliant feat by the Banderillero.

graceful, exciting and sportsmanlike, and it is worth going miles to see the valour and readiness he displays.

The *Picadores* are the horsemen. Theirs is a loathsome occupation. They collect miserable crocks, only fit for the knacker's yard, but instead of mercifully ending their decrepit old age with a pole-axe, the picadores blindfold the poor animals and take them into the ring to be gored to death by an infuriated bull.

Imagine any civilized people allowing a poor dumb, blindfolded horse to be slashed and spurred forward to certain death, on the pointed horns of a maddened bull. Fourteen horses were killed that day according to the newspaper report, and probably out of the five or six thousand spectators, I was almost the only person present who even mentally denounced such butchery as vile. I love sport, but I hate and detest cruelty, which this undoubtedly is.

The *Banderilleros* are wonderful. They are the men who stick darts in the bull's shoulder ; it is not kind, yet hardly cruel, for the points are only like large fish-hooks, which, while irritating, do not actually torture the animal. I admired these *banderilleros* enormously ; they hold a stick a couple of feet long, and gaily decorated with paper, in each hand, the spikes being at the opposite end. After waiting for the bull to charge, they rush right up to him, and plant the two darts in his shoulders, deftly jumping aside when he would fain toss them. This is more like sport, and their agility and daring are splendid.

The *Matador* is the grandest gentleman of all. To his lot falls the feat of killing the bull.

The music ceased, a blare of trumpets, yells of joy from the assembly, a door opposite the President was flung wide, and the proceedings began.

The *Cuadrilla* or procession of performers is really picturesque, and quite unique ; it belongs to the bull-ring

and is seen nowhere else. Those taking part in the bull-fight dress and form in procession just as they did in the days of ancient Spain, when Tauromachy was at its height.

First of all the *Alguacil* entered the ring alone. Being a sort of chamberlain, he was mounted on a most beautiful bay horse, adorned with a red velvet saddle-cloth embroidered in gold, and scarlet reins, while he himself wore a black velvet suit, and a large black velvet hat ornamented with scarlet plumes. As he pranced round the ring, he reminded me of Vandyck's famous picture of Charles I., only the horse should have been white instead of bay. The more the audience clapped, shouted and whistled, the more he danced. Finally he stopped beneath the President's box, and taking off his hat, which he held at arm's length, begged to know if the performance might begin.

Assent being given, the golden key of the door behind which the six bulls were hidden was thrown down, and gracefully caught by him in his hat.

He bowed, the band struck up, and off he pranced to fetch his "cuadrilla," the procession literally shining golden in the rays of the sun.

First rode our friend the Chamberlain, followed by the three gorgeously equipped matadores, each of whom was destined to kill two bulls that afternoon. Then came the picadores on their awful, broken-kneed, raw-boned old horses—such a contrast to the splendid steed which headed the procession—followed by the capeadores with their capes, and the banderilleros with their darts. A team of six white mules with red trappings came next; they were intended subsequently to drag out the dead bulls or horses. Some men with whips, and a butcher with his merciful knife, completed the cavalcade.

As they marched round the ring, they really looked most picturesque; the sun shone brilliantly on the gorgeous hues of their clothing and capes, and magnificently rich

golden embroideries. Certainly, the procession alone was worth going far to see. There was something beautiful and romantic about it all ; the men were young and handsome, well-made and brave, and courage in equal combat between man and beast is to be admired, at least, I am "sportsman" enough to think so.

After being well scrutinised, and enthusiastically applauded by the audience, they all left the ring, with the exception of the capeadores, who were to play with the bull, and the banderilleros, whose rôle came later.

A man in Mexican dress, who wore the tight trousers of the country, so tight the stranger wondered if he had been poured into them, stepped forward. His suit was made entirely of black—as if he had already donned mourning for the death of the bull. He took the key from the Chamberlain, and having watched the procession safely out of the ring, went to the door exactly opposite to us, which was midway between the two entrances, and unlocked it, carefully concealing himself behind the wooden door when he opened it, to let the hero of the hour emerge.

In a former chapter I described the capture on the open prairie of wild bulls for the fights ; that was the prologue, this the final scene. Mr. Toro, after being lassoed, and driven into a small box just big enough to hold him, travelled by train to Mexico City, where he had been kept in some dark place behind the bull-ring, until forced into a still darker chamber, just before the commencement of the fight.

At the last moment a huge rosette had been fixed in his shoulder by a man from above, by means of a little hole such as coals are shot through to cellars in England, the spike of the pin no doubt irritating him before his sudden transition from darkness to brilliant sunlight. This rosette of colour represents the "hacienda" from which he comes, and everyone in the ring knows who was his former owner,

just as a man on the race-course can tell the proprietor of each horse, by the colours worn by the jockey.

The door swung back, and out rushed bull No. 1. He galloped into the middle of the ring, and then stood still as though bewildered with the noise and light. A burst of applause followed ; he lifted his grand head, snorted, and seeing an inviting capeador near by, rushed at him full tilt. The cape was flourished before his eyes—which a bull always closes at the moment of charging—and the capeador jumped aside.

Another, and yet another assault. It was most exciting to see that grand bull, notwithstanding his strength and vivacity, deftly evaded by those slim youths. Occasionally the animal would run them right up to the barrier, over which they nimbly jumped, when we heard the horns of Toro strike the wooden boards, as he wildly tossed the cape thrown at his head, while the white legs of the capeador disappeared over the paling.

It almost seemed as if the bull would win, so close was the contest, but man triumphed all through on that occasion, though he does not always come off so well, for many persons lose their lives in the bull-ring. After five minutes' excellent sport, the bugle sounded, and a couple of miserable horses were ridden to the front of the ring. The picadores were dressed in leather suits with their legs all stiffly padded, to save them from the horns of the bull, and in their hands they carried lances ten feet long, with which to ward off the monster. I suppose it needs some courage to be a picador, for if his horse be really killed beneath him, he has no cape with which to divert the bull, and is, moreover, too heavily dressed to move with ease, and if he fall, can hardly rise without assistance ; nevertheless, he rides fearlessly up to the infuriated animal which madly lashes his tail, and waits the picador's charge. It may need courage, but oh ! what a fearful employment—to sit calmly

on a wretched old horse, with a cloth tied over his eyes, to spur and goad it on to death, from which it has not the smallest chance of escape.

Is a bull-fight cruel? Yes, a thousand times yes, so long as such horse torture is allowed; were that omitted, it would be an equal contest between man and beast, until the final stroke of the matador's sword, which is surely as merciful as the butcher's pole-axe.

I do not know what happened to the horses after the first charge, for I went to the back of the box; I could not look, it made me sick even to think of such cruelty; so I waited until I heard that the poor brutes had been led away, bleeding unto death, to have their days ended outside.

Some pretty play followed. The bugle sounded again, and one of the *banderilleros* stepped forward into the middle of the ring. He stood still, facing Mr. Toro, until that gentleman chose to charge, looking the very impersonation of manly grace, his arms lifted high in the air, his *banderillas*, one in each hand, held at the extremest end from the dart. It was quite a long time before the bull would charge; he dashed at everyone else, but carefully avoided the owner of the darts, as if he knew their purpose; suddenly, as if forgetting, he rushed full tilt at his waiting enemy. The man had no cape, no means of warding off those deadly horns, yet he never flinched, and only stepped aside to let the bull's head graze his legs, while he calmly and gracefully lifted his arms on high, and planted his *banderillas* in the beast's shoulder. It was a most artistic performance, perhaps the most skilful of all, though the death-stroke of a matador is considered the finest effect in a bull-ring.

Six, or sometimes eight, *banderillas* are stuck into a bull before the signal is given for the arrival of the matador, who, when he enters, arrayed in some pale satin and gold embroidery, stands and bows to the President. The first

matador's pink jacket and knee-breeches must have cost a large sum, while his elaborately-embroidered shirt, and handsome scarlet silk sash, completed a truly gorgeous costume. White stockings and small black slippers were, it seemed, *de rigueur*, and, apparently, no head covering, for after bowing to the President, receiving his commands, and dedicating the bull to some fair lady's name, he threw his hat to the audience to be kept until his return.

He held a scarlet muleta or "red rag," kept open by a piece of stick inside, while hidden in the folds was the fatal sword. Mr. Bull must not see its glint until the last moment. The matador cannot play his cape as the capeadors do, for it hides the long thin sword, and therefore, so to speak, he really takes his life in his hand.

The bull, who hitherto had seemed thoroughly to enjoy the performance, became more uneasy, after the darts had been placed in his shoulder, and appeared determined, if there must be a fight, it should be a fight to death; his strength and instinct pitted against man's skill.

Alone—for all others stood back—that matador advanced into the middle of the ring towards the bull; his play was very clever.

A matador is no butcher, and his capacity is gauged by the skill and despatch with which he kills his victim. There is one spot in the back of the bull's neck where a "pinchazos" or sword-thrust means sudden death, either by cutting the spinal cord, or piercing the heart. Now in order to strike that point, it is necessary for the animal to rush absolutely straight at his adversary, and *with his head down*. Frequently the bull rushes in every conceivable direction but the right one; often, if he sees the gleam of steel he will not charge at all, and therefore it is that the matador is obliged to conceal his weapon until the last moment.

It was most thrilling to see the bull and the man



The Alguacil, or Chamberlain of the bull-ring.



Death of the bull.

parrying each other as a pair of good fencers might do. There was nothing cruel about it, for the matador never struck until he was sure his blow would be fatal.

Look at them! The bull stands motionless, his head down, ready for his final rush; the matador, only seven or eight feet away from him, remains perfectly motionless. The stillness was oppressive. This was the moment of wildest excitement; both man and beast stood as though turned to stone; then slowly, and almost imperceptibly, his eyes fixed steadily on the bull, the matador quietly brought his sword from under his cloak, and holding it straight out before him, with elbow bent to ensure correct aim, the point within four or five feet of the bull's head, he waited. Neither moved, the brute seemed paralyzed under the man's gaze, the man as still as a marble statue.

A dead silence ensued, during which we wondered which would win.

The man at first did not move. Then he seemed electrified. Determination shot from his eyes. He raised himself on his toes. A rush, and on came the bull. One thrust, and deep down into his neck went that well-aimed sword, nothing but the golden handle remaining visible. It was a master-stroke. The silence of that vast multitude was so great it could almost be heard. The bull stood for an instant as though petrified, then he tottered a few steps towards the side of the ring; he was senseless now. Twisting round as though trying to walk, he fell on his knees, bowed his head in the dust, rolled over and died.

It was all over in a few seconds; the matador's stroke had done its work, and done it courageously and humanely. The bull lay dead at the victor's feet. There was nothing cruel in that.

Yells of applause suddenly filled the air; hats were thrown into the arena, cigars and flowers quickly followed, and a perfect ovation greeted the matador's success. He

deserved it all. Although quite a young man, he had shown pluck and courage, and a complete mastery of his art.

More bugles, and in galloped a team of mules. The dead bull was tied by the hind legs, and dragged out. His life had ended in noble combat, a fine example of the courage of his race.

I admired it all. For the time I forgot the unfortunate horses, and felt that a bull-fight was neither cruel nor brutal, though, alas! with those wretched horses left in the programme it was unworthy of mankind.

Hardly was the ring cleared before the second bull rushed in, and the programme was repeated. In the excitement of the moment, and in spite of the distance, I struggled to take some photographs of the scenes taking place below. This bull, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, jumped the barrier on three different occasions, and although not such a fine-looking animal as the first, he was wild and excitable.

Alas! That matador was a fool. Some say the bull charged badly and danced around, but there can be no doubt that the matador missed his first thrust, and injured the animal without killing him. Again he missed, and even a third time. It was a sickening sight, and I left the box, only to hear the groans and hisses of the populace, which continued until the matador eventually landed his quarry. This performance seemed positively vile—I would not risk the chance of repetition, and left the building feeling sick at heart at the sight of such butchery, for butchery it undoubtedly was, and is, whenever the animal is not killed at the first thrust. Fair combat and speedy death alone are sport.

Butchery—I use the term advisedly—is appalling, and surely public opinion ought to hound a bad matador from the ring after such an exhibition of incompetency. A bull-

fight is a fine trial of skill and courage ; I had seen enough to feel enthusiastic with regard to the dexterity and valour of man, and the strength and courage of the bull ; therefore, to my mind, a bull-fight is not cruel so long as the opponents meet in equal combat. The poor, decrepit, murdered horses must, however, be omitted, and it is indispensable that the matadors know and understand their business, else the spectacle becomes disgusting.

The President and Madame Diaz do not approve of bull-fights ; the highest people in the land seldom go to them ; but so popular are they with the lower classes that every attempt to stop them has proved futile, and judging by the enthusiasm I witnessed in the Plaza de Toros, they are likely to continue.

When a charity bull-fight is given, as sometimes happens, for of course it is an enormously profitable entertainment, certain young ladies in high society are chosen as "Queens of the Ring." The committee ask three or four of the prettiest and most charming maidens of the town to grace the fight with their presence. They are given a box next to that of the President, which is gaily decorated with flowers for the occasion ; bouquets are placed in it for the fair occupants, each of whom is given a badge of honour denoting that she is Queen of the Ring.

After the death of each bull, the matador and chief performers go up to the box to receive the ladies' congratulations, and generally some decoration or badge is pinned upon their breasts by one of the Queens.

Bull and cock-fights are the sport of Mexico, just as horse-racing and cricket are pastimes in Britain, or trotting in America ; but sport is one thing, cruelty to animals another.

The following, which appeared in a local paper one day during my visit to Mexico, gives a very good idea of the spirit of the age, and how youth is encouraged.

"The exhibition given by the juvenile bull-fighters in Juarez last Sunday (Jan. 1901), was by far the best seen there for a long time. The bulls were excellent. The fifteen-year-old boy who officiated as matador, killed two bulls, winning the highest applause by his clever work. When the fourth bull was turned in, the youngest of the troupe, who is but thirteen, besought permission of the judges to kill him, and was allowed to do so. The bull was no mean fighter, but the boy did some fine work, and when he drove the sword in up to the hilt, the applause was deafening, and the older bull-fighter, who acts as trainer, picked him up in his arms, and hugged him in his enthusiasm."

These boys are now heroes! The lad of thirteen was publicly embraced by an old and experienced bull-fighter! He was the envy of his companions, the admired of thousands. When babies are allowed to witness bull-fights, and mere children take part in them, it is no wonder that the entertainment becomes part and parcel of their lives, therefore how is the cruel element ever to be stamped out?

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND MADAME DIAZ' POSADA.

CHRISTMAS festivities in Mexico begin nine days before the twenty-fifth of December, and end on New Year's Day. The customs of posadas and piñatas are peculiar to the country, and consequently of great interest.

A few days before Christmas the Governor of the Federal district called and said :

“ Madame Diaz wishes me to invite you to her posada, that is if you think you will not feel lonely among so many Mexicans. She will be glad to welcome you.”

I almost jumped for joy. A posada was just the thing I wanted to see, and above all a posada given by the President of Mexico. I felt highly delighted at the honour, for these posadas are family parties, and as a rule no outsiders—not even Foreign Ministers—are invited.

The word in Spanish means “abiding-place,” or “inn”; and while the ceremony is semi-religious, the subsequent developments are extremely jovial. These posadas last from December 16th to the 24th, on which latter date Christmas proper is kept.

The wealthiest folk of Mexico, as well as the poorest invariably hold a posada. Each year one house of a family circle is chosen for the celebrations, and at that house for nine consecutive nights high festival is held. The first day one lady invites her friends, gives the presents, and

plays the rôle of hostess, and the next evening another takes her place. Sometimes two or three combine forces, but in any case, for nine consecutive nights festivities continue.

As regards the origin of the custom. We all know "because there was no room for them in the inn," Mary and Joseph who journeyed for nine days, were obliged to take shelter in a stable, where the infant Christ was born. Therefore it is that the nine days' posada characteristically begins with the commencement of the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, whither they went in obedience to an order from the Roman Emperor that "all the world should be taxed." Needless to say, every night they had to find shelter at some inn, and it is in remembrance of that nightly halt that these strange customs are kept up.

On the evening chosen for the religious service, servants and friends attend, more soberly attired than on other occasions. In one of the rooms an altar, decorated with blue and white draperies, intermingled with the feathery grey Chapultepec moss, is erected. Below in the centre is a model of a stable, showing the child Christ, with various small statues grouped around.

Pictures of the Virgin hang over the temporary altar, on which candles are burning, while a dense cloud of incense pervades the chamber.

In the better houses the Holy Family is often exquisitely fashioned in ivory or plaster, is in fact a work of art which can be used for years; but as every house has some form of Holy Family, even the very poorest investing their few centavos to acquire the figures, they are often made after the rudest design.

Once the party is assembled, and prayer ended, the guests cross themselves before these images, and kneel about the room in couples, holding lighted candles in their hands. Children and servants always take part in these ceremonials, and after the Mass has been read by the

family priest a procession is formed. Every man, woman and child in the establishment, candle in hand, walks two and two through the house from basement to attic. The figures of Mary and Joseph are borne solemnly in front, while the worshippers intone the Litany of Loretto.

The dresses of the Holy Couple are sometimes strange. I have seen many made of bright yellow, blue or red satin, trimmed with tinselled borderings and common lace, the angel who hovers overhead being represented in wax of florid colouring. In spite of this, however, the service is distinctly religious and enthusiastic. On wanders the procession, through the corridors and up and down the stairs, revisiting the same rooms, and pausing now and again to knock at some door and beg admittance. When the Litany is finished, two or three of the party enter a room and shut the door. Outside remain the figures of the Virgin and Joseph, while the rest of the procession sing the following chant, supposed to represent the plea of Joseph for admission for his wife :

“In Heaven’s Name I beg for shelter,
My wife to-night can go no further.”

To which comes the reply :

“No Inn is this, begone from hence,
Ye may be thieves, I trust ye not.”

The tune is one of immemorial antiquity.

After this the party is guided by the hostess to some spot chosen for the conclusion of the ceremony. Sometimes the roof, in which case the worshippers stumble up the stairs, where, opening a door, they have to carefully guard their candles from being extinguished by the night air. On the flat roof a kind of stable has already been arranged, in which, with the utmost reverence, the figures of Mary and Joseph are placed. At that moment the church bells ring out the hour of midnight, and the posada is ended, the stars

shining as brightly in the heavens as did that famous orb, over nineteen hundred years ago, on Bethlehem.

Until quite lately, this performance at Christmas-time was of nightly occurrence ; it then took place early in the evening, and was followed by a dance and romp for the children. The Church, thinking it inadvisable to join a religious ceremony with frivolities, ordered the processional posada should take place only on one evening of the nine.

Christmas is a great event in Mexico. These *fiesta*-loving people thoroughly enjoy their posadas and piñatas, quaint, picturesque customs entirely peculiar to the land. By the middle of December the markets and squares were crowded with booths, for the sale of Christmas dainties. That is a universal custom throughout the length and breadth of Mexico. The *plazas* and *zocals* are filled with stands groaning beneath the weight of presents, decorations for altars, or groups for crêches. In Mexico City alone there were hundreds of these stalls containing every conceivable kind of candy and sugared fruit, together with pottery, while more particularly in connection with Christmas appeared little figures representing sacred persons, the Three Kings—whose fête day is the sixth of January, or Twelfth-night—being a favourite group. These queer figures, usually four or five inches high, are supposed to represent three races, a Negro, a Caucasian, and a Mongolian.

Of course, the everlasting peanuts were there, Chinese lanterns, wooden toys, hideous masks, woolly monkeys and lambs. Among other things were a few *Naguales*. These weird things are used to frighten children and make them good. A Nagual is a horribly ugly production ; a woolly body on four primitive little legs is given a human but grotesque face. They are supposed to have magic power like the devil. Of course all those sold at the fairs are toys for children, but there are many grown-up persons who believe that real Naguales, the size of men, exist, and that

they can transform themselves and become invisible. Probably this idea of magicians is a remnant of sorcery not yet extinct in Mexico.

Then there were reed baskets woven by the Indians, brown glazed ware—representing man, fish, beast or fowl—such as is made at Guadalupe; charming dark-green glazed pottery from Oaxaca, lustres from San Felipe, curious toys woven from horse-hair, drawn-thread work from Aguas Calientes, beautiful feather picture-work for which the Indians are noted, even to-day, crypts for the posadas, of wondrous make and ingenuity, confetti, tropical fruits, flags, draperies, paper decorations, all these groaned on the shelves of the booths.

It is a veritable paradise for children, and so interesting did I find the commodities on sale at that Christmas fair, and the strange motley of aristocratic Spaniards and Mexican Indians, that I spent several evenings wandering among the stalls. At one of the counters I bought several bits of pottery, including the Three Kings—all told they only cost about a dollar—but not exactly knowing how to carry them home, for paper was not procurable, I spread out a handkerchief, intending to convey them away in that manner. The saleswoman, however, would not hear of it. She thought I should break the precious things, and insisted on giving me a beautiful reed basket, into which she packed the various bits of pottery, and for which she absolutely refused any remuneration.

In the crowd one was continually running up against piñatas. Now these are something particularly weird and peculiar. In many European countries we have a Christmas tree, but in Mexico the piñata takes its place. One passes an Indian with a five or six feet pole swung across his shoulder, or a bamboo reed, from which are hanging paper dolls. These strange figures are usually about four feet high; they represent a clown with different

coloured arms and legs, a ballet-girl, nigger, fashionable man or woman, a ship in full sail, or sometimes a grotesque animal. They are all decidedly corpulent about the centre of the body; this is because they are full of sweets and treasures. To keep the figure together, the form is roughly cut out in cardboard, or light sticks are bound so as to make the body, arms and legs. The centre is composed of an *olla* or *casuela*, literally meaning bowl or vase. The *olla* is crammed full of sweets, rattles, whistles and crackers, and forms the centre of the grotesque figure. It is hung by strings which come out at the head. Of course the piñatas can be made by the Indians for a few pence, and one at that price is to be found in every hut. Among the rich, however, hundreds of dollars may be contained in the piñatas, which are broken during the Christmas festivities. There must have been thousands of piñatas, with their gaudy colours and streams of paper or tinsel, sold during those days before Christmas in the public squares of Mexico; men and women were hawking them through the streets continually. People were bargaining for their purchase at every corner, and it was rather amusing to see some sedate old papa hastening home with a tissue paper ballet-girl of gorgeous hues and tinselled decorations under his arm. Indeed, even a grand victoria drew up on one occasion, and the lady inside, having taken a particular fancy to a Mephistophelian doll, bought the same, placed it beside her on the seat, and proceeded to drive it solemnly home.

For a fortnight excitement was in the air, Christmas on every tongue, the entire population buying presents and hiding them away for the great day, for the present-giving craze exceeds anything I have ever known. It extends outside the family to friends, and even acquaintances.

The day of Madame Diaz' posada duly arrived, and, all excitement for such a novel party, I waited like a little

girl "to be fetched." Below is a list of some of the entertainers on the nine consecutive nights:

Señor Presidente Don Porfirio Diaz, Capitan Don Porfirio Diaz, Señor Jose Ives Limantour (Financial Secretary), General Reyes (War Secretary), Señor Gonzalez Cosie (Home Secretary), Señor Jose Maria Gamboa (Under Secretary, Foreign Office), Señor Guillermo de Landa y Escandon (Governor of Federal District and Mayor), Señor Cervantes de Riba, Señor de Teresa Miranda (Minister in Vienna), Señor Ignacio Mariscal (Foreign Secretary), Señor Julio Limantour (Deputy), Señor Tomas Moran (Deputy), Señor Alonso Mariscal (Deputy), Señor Genaro Raigosa (Senator), Señor Jose W. de Landa y Escandon (Deputy), Señor Don Sebastian Camacho (Senator), Señor Benito Gomez Farias (Senator), Señor Carlos Rivas (Senator), Señor Pablo Martinez del Rio (Deputy), Señor Cervantes, Señor Riva y Echeverria (Deputy), Señor Joaquin Casasus, Señor Pablo Macedo, Señor Joaquin Redo (Senator), Señor Algara (Deputy), Señora T. de Rincon Gallardo, Señor Escheverria, and their wives.

A little before eight o'clock we drove up to the stately mansion of Señor and Señora Cervantes de Riba of Buenavista. It was a typical Mexican home. Inside was a large patio, probably the largest in Mexico, full of flowers and palms, the particular joy of Señora Riba. The stone floor had been carpeted, and small tables, arranged for supper, stood among the palms, overhung by Chinese lanterns and fairy lights. The sky was shut out by an artificial ceiling of canvas, a necessary precaution during that wintry December, when the temperature for a whole month was about 47 degs. F., or exactly the same as in London, where huge fires were burning in the grates. In Mexico, however, there are no fires or heating contrivances whatever, yet the rooms are enormous, and there are great open patios everywhere. I have been in Arctic regions, travelled through Norway with the thermometer at 47 degrees below freezing point, yet I never felt so cold as in the raw dampness of Mexico City, situated on the verge of the Tropics.

This was only in December however; after that experience glorious bright sunny days were universal.

Fortunately the night was fine, and all went merry as a marriage bell. As it was the posada of the President of the Mexican Republic and his charming wife, several extra

features had been added to the evening's entertainment. An order had been issued that every dancing maiden should come in fancy dress made of paper!

It sounds impossible; yet so deft are Mexican fingers that the result was one of the prettiest balls I have ever seen. Empire and Kate Greenaway styles were favourites, and the ingenuity with which costumes and poke bonnets were executed was remarkable. There were vivandières and follies; babies, Red Riding Hoods and Charlotte Cordays; but one and all were garbed in paper, just simple crinkled lamp-shade paper, sometimes of plain colours, sometimes ornamented with floral designs; yes, impossible as it may sound, these dainty and artistic frocks were fashioned merely of paper. Most of the girls had made their own dresses, which did the greatest credit to the young ladies, whose pretty faces were by no means marred by their curious-textured gowns.

Most of the dancing men were attired in red dress-coats, just like an English hunt evening dress, only the Mexicans wore black knee breeches and silk stockings, and had powdered their hair white.

Madame Diaz received graciously. Although the President and his wife hold such an honoured position, they are not treated like royalty. No one curtseys to them, all shake hands, yet everyone rises when they enter or leave a room, though Madame Diaz invariably bids them remain seated.

Valses and quadrilles were in the programme; besides these a delightful Spanish dance was given by a couple of handsome young people dressed as a matador and cigarette-maker, with tambourine and mantilla.

Another very favourite movement is the Danza, which is known from Spain to South America, from Manila to Mexico City. It is a kind of slow Washington Post, only that four dance together, taking hands as in the ladies' chain in the Quadrille, and every now and then take a few turns

with their own partners. It is slow, but extremely graceful, and more than half the dances on a programme are these stately examples of the terpsichorean art.

During the course of the evening the distribution of presents began—a sad tax on the hostess who gives the posada, for everyone attending bears away a memento!

Madame Diaz' presents were beautiful. Everything was of silver—match-boxes, or cigar-cutters, for the men, flower-vases, bonbonnières, letter-weights, gum-bottles, or stamp-boxes for the women. A couple of men-servants in Presidential livery carried trays laden with gifts, which Madame Diaz distributed to each of her hundred and fifty guests as a souvenir of her ball. To me she gave a silver bonbonnière, saying, in faultless English :

“With all kindly wishes, and hopes that you will not forget us in England.” It took the greatest lady in the land, who has acquired the manners of a queen, quite a long time to walk round the spacious rooms, and she did so while dancing was going on, not to interfere with the pleasure of the younger folk. I say “younger” advisedly, for a married woman in Mexico, be she only seventeen, as is often the case, rarely dances. In fact, the life of a Mexican woman is not a jovial one; she marries straight from the convent or school, and her home is her horizon. Very ideal no doubt, but rather dull.

About ten o’clock we were called to view the fireworks. At the back of the house is a balcony from which, muffled in cloaks, we witnessed the display. Fire balloons, rockets, catherine wheels, all went off in grand fashion, and soared away into those starry deep black heavens.

Now arrived the moment for breaking the piñata. Hanging in the garden below were three—a ballet-dancer, a ship, and a clown—each full of sweets, whistles, jumping frogs, confetti, wonderful puzzles, crackers, or such-like toys. The youngest little girl present was blindfolded, given a stick,

and told to go and strike a piñata ; after several fruitless attempts, amid much laughter, she succeeded in hitting the hanging treasure, when down came the shower, and everyone scrambled on hands and knees for the contents. Three were broken in succession amid shrieks of joy and laughter, in which old and young joined heartily.

At about 11.30 supper was served. All the younger folk tripped off to the little tables in the hall downstairs, where the bright dresses and scarlet coats looked lovely among the green palms and red shaded candles. Never have I seen a prettier effect than that splendid patio, with its red carpet and marble stairs, the fancy dresses, and the dainty tables arranged so cunningly among sheltering foliage.

About thirty guests were invited to the private dining-room of the President and Madame Diaz on the first floor, where the drawing-rooms and best bedrooms all led out of one another. I was fortunate enough to be among the honoured few, and found a most delightful companion in the famous Minister of Finance, Senor José Limantour who, being of French extraction, had been educated in that country, and conversation was consequently an easy matter. The Marquis de Corvera (Spanish Minister), also proved interesting, and I thoroughly enjoyed my Christmas supper-party ! Roses decorated the table, grown out of doors, despite the cold weather ; a problem I never succeeded in solving, for though in Britain roses cannot grow out of doors in a temperature of 47 deg. F., yet in Mexico they flourish and are beautiful.

Hot soup was followed by cold meats, chicken, salad, creams and strawberries—also grown out of doors, but not at such an elevation as the City, for they came from the lower lands, where they grow all the year round.

After supper the Presidential party left. All rose, and with a pretty “good-bye,” and thanks for drinking her health, Madame Diaz disappeared, followed by the owner

of the house and the Ministers, who escorted the President and herself to their carriage. We proceeded to eat ices, at least those of us who did not find them too cold.

It was half-past one before we left, feeling we had enjoyed a most delightful evening, thoroughly appreciating this peep into the Christmas party of the highest in the land. It was truly a family party! Everyone was related to everyone else, for these good old Spanish families have numerous children who marry and intermarry until everybody is a sister or brother-in-law, a cousin, a nephew or a niece! As if this endless relationship were not enough, others are added. For instance, God-parents are very important people, almost as important as relations; the god-father is styled *Padrino*, the god-mother *Madrina*, and they are *Compadres* to the child's parents. Now these compadres become spiritually related to the child's parents, wedded, so to speak, by the bonds of the Church, and supposing that Mrs. A.'s husband dies, and Mr. S.—who is the dearest friend of the family, and the *Padrino* of her child—falls in love with Mrs. A.; why, he must not marry her, for the Church forbids compadres to marry. But in the same way that the Roman Catholic Church forbids divorce, dispensations are not entirely unknown!

God-parents look upon their office as a sacred one; they take the spiritual life of the child in their hands, and if the parents die, often fill their place towards the god-child.

An infant is christened a few days after its birth, and among the common people the father and his compadres give a dance in honour of the event. The mother is barely out of danger, but unless she is seriously ill, her husband gives his ball and makes merry. Then a printed notice called *Bollo*, is sent to friends, to notify that A.B.C. was baptised on such a day, and the god-parents were ——. At the top of the card is a coin, a real coin; to near relations a small gold dollar is affixed, to mere friends a tiny silver

piece, emblematic of comfort and good fare for the new-born babe. Even to-day a twenty-dollar gold coin is given by the compadres to the doctor, midwife, father, mother and priest.

It must be terribly expensive to be a compadre, for the god-parents give a child, besides the ordinary cup and bowl, all its smart clothes for the christening! Robe, cloak, etc.—made of the most expensive lace and embroidery among rich folk; and a small charm or mascot is given to the baby, and hung round its neck for luck.

Then, again, as soon as the populace become aware a wealthy christening is in progress, they all flock to the church door, because the compadres are expected to distribute "bolla," or money to the indigent. Handfuls of coins are thrown and scrambled for by the crowd. Poor compadres! Their purses must be considerably lighter at the end of the day's festivities!

When that child is confirmed, new compadres are often chosen, or again, when the Christmas altar is packed up and put away, the youth and maid chosen to fill the sacred and solemn office, become compadres for the occasion. Again, at a party lots may be drawn, and the man to whose care a girl chances, finds himself her compadre for the evening, and is bound to look after her every want. There is no end to the compadre business, and to a stranger it appears as though everyone must be a relation or compadre of somebody else, so small and select is the society of Mexico City.

Up to the time of Cortés it was quite common for parents to sacrifice their newly-born babes; but these days have long gone by, and the compadres look after them if the parents in any way fail; and to-day, especially among the poor Indians, the parents try to beg, borrow or steal a piece of coral to put on the infant to protect it from harm. They are most superstitious!

As we drove home in the still hours of the night, after that wonderful posada, we passed a solitary beggar, a poor

wretch lying huddled up on one of those wide doorsteps. Beggars are to a certain extent licensed in Mexico, that is to say, if a person be an invalid or cripple, and have no way of earning money, he is given permission to beg. This is not, however, allowed in the chief streets, and generally the outside of some church door is allotted to the candidate.

Should the applicants be merely destitute, they are sent to an asylum and obliged to perform a small amount of work. Children under fifteen are provided with permission for the sale of papers, otherwise if they attempt to dispose of such they are run in and sent off to schools of correction.

I was happy and tired that night when I drove home, and among other new experiences, this "elderly scribe" had been guilty of her first valse on Mexican soil. Oh dear! what a breathless entertainment it proved!

Mexico City is nearly 8,000 feet above sea-level. It is not everyone who can stand the altitude, and only those who settle there while young ever get accustomed to it. The first time I ran upstairs it was a horrible shock. Old age seemed suddenly to have overtaken me. Was the editor of *M.A.P.* right?

One is apt to forget that at such a tremendous altitude—for there is no large town in Europe situated so high—the heart has to do 30% more work than is required of it lower down, because the blood takes up less oxygen as it passes through the lungs, and causes breathlessness. The heart, which in every-day circumstances jogs along quietly and does its best, rebels when required to run or dance, and the result is palpitation! Another thing I noticed in connection with these altitudes, namely, that both in ascending and descending 10,000 feet in the train, I experienced a curious feeling of nausea and buzzing in the head. It was only temporary, but such different altitudes, covered in a few hours, affect even the strongest.

CHAPTER XIII.

ODDS AND ENDS.

“WILL you take me to a real Mexican Restaurant?” I asked Mr. O’Brian, the stepson of Mr. Justice Würtele, of Montreal. “Nothing grand, just the common sort of eating-house, where the real native takes his meal?”

“Certainly ; you won’t like it, but you shall go, of course,” he replied. Accordingly, off we started about seven o’clock one evening to the representative meal. I wore an old black dress, left my watch and brooches at home, and felt ready for a peep into native life.

Arrived at the Meson de las Ratas (House of the Rats, a well-known haunt of pickpockets), my companion opened the door.

“If it is *too* primitive just tell me,” he said, “and we will go elsewhere.”

My heart failed me for a moment. The room, and a couple of rooms beyond, were full of men. They wore large felt or straw hats ; many were attired in cotton shirts, others had red blankets thrown around them. They were of the people—there was no doubt about that—and the only two women present had shawls over their heads.

“This will do, it is just the thing, and now we must have real Mexican dishes,” I replied.

Accordingly we sat down at a small table. Suddenly, I remembered I had not taken off my rings, and feeling the



Ornamentations from Aztec Wall of Serpents.



Stone serpent's head from Wall of Serpents.

diamonds might attract attention which would end in trouble, I slipped them from my fingers under the table, and asked my host to put them in his waistcoat pocket.

Before the menu arrived, a bundle of knives and forks were thrust on the marble table before us, and sticking on to the ends of the forks were rolls of bread. Dish No. 1 was *Huevos Rancheros*, which means eggs served ranche fashion. A couple of eggs are fried for a portion, put on to a plate and covered over with chilli sauce. Everything Mexican has chilli in it, and, not infrequently, garlic! How the folk eat all the peppers, chillis, and survive, is marvellous, but they do!

This experiment was hot, well-served, and delicious, despite the sanded floor and primitive surroundings. After it came *Enchiladas*. This dish was composed of four tortillas overlapping one another on the plate, sprinkled with cheese and onion, and ornamented with a lettuce leaf and radishes, the whole well soaked in chilli sauce. That sauce almost killed me; it was so hot that I was obliged to open my mouth and gasp!

“Now you must have some *pulque*,” said my friend, and accordingly I drank some of that milk and watery-looking liquid which comes into Mexico City by train loads every morning, after being extracted from the cactus. It smelt like bad cheese, but, though tasting horrid, it was just possible to drink it. Before we left the table several of our companions were the worse for pulque, one of the curses of Mexico. A man will go out and pawn his coat for this drink, return and pawn his hat or knife, anything and everything, in order to obtain the soddening liquid. It does not excite, it appears to deaden and dull the senses.

Seeing what looked like olives upon the table, as my tongue was still burning, I popped one into my mouth. Lo! it was a *chilitos*, or small green chilli, and my plight was worse than ever. I did not find it “chilly,” or even cooling, but rather like a live volcano! Tears began to flow, my

lips to swell, and I felt wretched ; yet Mexicans eat whole dishes of these between the courses, as we nibble nuts. What sort of palates have they, I wonder ?

Our third course consisted of *Chiles rellenos*, i.e., green peppers stuffed with cream cheese. These peppers look almost like green figs, and although terribly hot, have a nice flavour, but as they are not spicy enough to suit the Mexican palate, the inevitable chilli sauce was dashed over them likewise. Last came another national dish, namely, *frijoles*, or beans. Served with thick brown sauce, parmesan cheese, and crisply-toasted tortilla, they were excellent.

It interested me much to see the way these people ate. Few of them used forks, they merely doubled bits of tortilla in such a way that they could use them as knife, fork or spoon, shovelled up what they wanted, and popped their server and food into their mouth together. They placed their elbows on the table with each new dish, and bending well over it, gobbled everything up without lifting their arms from the table. Every man tipped up his plate and drank the gravy with a good deal of noise.

During this wonderful repast, which cost one shilling and tenpence for two, we had various entertainments, though we ourselves appeared to form the chief amusement of the evening, judging by the way our companions stared. A musical performer came in, and doffing his hat—all the guests sat in theirs, for there was no room to put down anything so enormous—whistled an imitation of various instruments. The guitar and banjo were particularly good. Several of the guests perused the newspaper Government subsidises to encourage reading, which is sold at about one farthing a copy. Two or three years ago the sight of a Mexican reading would have been impossible.

It was all very entertaining ; when suddenly a tremendous row took place. Some of the dogs, lying at the feet of their masters, began to fight. An impromptu dog

war began. Up jumped the guests, some on to the chairs and tables, others took their hats off and flung them at the animals, but a real scuffle and terrible noise ensued, and it was some minutes before one of the combatants was forcibly ejected with kicks and thumps into the street, and order reigned again.

I thoroughly enjoyed my evening in that "tavern in the town," though the neighbourhood was risky, and probably every man at the tables wore his knife, while many carried a revolver. An Indian is ready to use either weapon at a moment's notice. Travellers, however, are safe in Mexico unless they annoy or insult the people ; if they do, then woe betide them !

Speaking of the populace reminds me of the extraordinary cruelty to animals seen in the streets of Mexico, aye, and to children also. Small girls of four and five stagger along, carrying heavy babies, boys of six and seven bear weights upon their heads a mile and more from the markets that simply horrify a stranger. Poor little people, they seem all shrunken up under their dreadful loads ; but that is nothing compared with what the animals suffer. There are a few electric tram lines, and about a dozen drawn by mules, all skin and bone ; cabhorses are in like case, and when drawing carts, or carrying packs, the mules will actually lie down and die in the street, while men try to kick and beat them back to life. It is a disgrace to humanity ! Where is the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ?

The origin of much of this is the pulque shop. The public-house is the club of the poor Britisher ; the saloon is the American's lounge, and the pulque shop of Mexico City is the Indian's Haven of Rest, although he really finds no rest there.

Our public-houses prove attractive at night chiefly owing to the warmth and glow reflected by their windows ; so

attractive, indeed, are the coloured lights and the atmosphere of comforting heat, that one can hardly wonder if poor, shivering, half-starved humanity enters. Perhaps it is their misfortune, not their fault, that they have no comfortable home, no club, probably no fire. Here they find all, and for the paltry sum of twopence, poor wretches!

'Tis otherwise with the pulque shops, where there are no seats. They are all closed by law at five o'clock, therefore a man must do his drinking during the day, and it is wonderful what a large amount he manages to consume ere shutting-up time.

Passing along a Mexican street one notices a sour smell ; it is caused by the half-fermented pulque. The shop has no windows, merely large doors, over which are hung fringes of coloured paper to attract attention, or perhaps flies ! The walls are painted everywhere with strange mermaids or dolphins, volcanoes or boats, according to the fanciful name of the shop. Inside it might pass for a china warehouse, owing to the rows of plates, jugs and mugs ranged upon the wall. These have nothing to do with pulque, they are merely for ornament, but there they are in hundreds. The milk-like liquid is sold in tumblers.

Men, women, children, aye, and babies who can barely toddle, all drink their pulque standing at the counter until—well, until they can stand no longer, when they just fall down, and I have never seen such “dead-drunk” people as those suffering from an excess of pulque ; they lie as if dead, in the true sense of the word, until they have slept off its effects.

A remnant of old picture writing still remains in Mexico, as in Holland. Before they knew how to write the name of the owner of a shop, they painted a sign by which the place could be recognised. Even to-day these extraordinary pictures are to be seen in all the lower parts of the town, the walls are like grotesque picture books, and



Man and gourd, with which he extracts pulque (the drink of the country) from the mague plant.

even in the better quarters titles are given to the shops instead of the owners' names. Some of them are funny and extremely inappropriate. The drink shops perhaps choose the strangest, a few of which we give haphazard.

In Remembrance of the Future	Pulque	Daughter of Snow	Butcher
The Avenger	"	The Gladiator	Fruit and Vegetables
The Last Days of Pompeii	"	The Three Graces	"
Star of Bethlehem	"	Golden Star	Grocery
The Peace of Cuba	"	Adam and Eve	"
The Sorrow	"	The Senator	Barber's Shop
The Arts	"	The Blue Horse	"
The Mad King	"	The Fountain of Gold	"
The Little Hill	"	The Wolf in a Cage	"
Diana's Saloon	"	Sacred Heart of Jesus	Baker
Temple of Love	"	The Pearl of Saint Catherine	Pawnbroker
The White Rose	"	The Ideal of Art	"
Toad in the Hole	Butcher (hangs out a red flag to denote he has freshly-killed meat).	The Rose of the Sea	"
		Shower of Gold	"

To show the primitive methods which still obtain in this great capital, I may mention that the streets are watered by men with pails! And this in Mexico, which at certain seasons of the year (just before the rains of summer) is quite the dustiest city in the world. Out they come by dozens, these Indians with their cans, and inch by inch endeavour to water the town. It is but an endeavour, for the sun is hot, and in a quarter of an hour the place becomes as dry as ever!

There are no bath-chairs; but there are invalids—how can it be otherwise at such an altitude? In this respect again the arrangements are truly wonderful.

Mexicans carry everything on their head or back, and no weight seems too heavy for them. The result is they have a sort of box-like chair with a foot-board, strapped to their shoulders on which the invalid takes his airing, back to back with his bearer. It looks most uncomfortable for both parties. The feet come somewhere about the porter's waist and the body a little higher. Of course, the sick man

has to ride backwards, and so high up one would imagine he must feel insecure; but apparently this is not the case, for I once walked for a long distance behind a fat old gentleman who, while being carried, complacently read his newspaper.

Furniture removing is another strange performance; there are no vans, so everything has to be carried to its destination. Four men, each holding the end of a pole, trot along with a heavy wardrobe suspended therefrom, and as the streets are not over wide, and the traffic considerably congested by tram-cars, the width of a wardrobe passing along does not tend to make matters less difficult.

The town is built on a swamp, consequently water does not easily run away. When I was there all the drains were up—they had been up for a year, and seemed likely to be up for several more. But for the odours emitted, it would have been quite interesting to watch the men working in the depths of inky black mud. It was hot work, and a pair of cotton trousers constituted their sole apparel, as they burrowed in liquid mud, converted into a veritable flood by recent rains.

Mexico is built more or less on piles, no longer sticking up above the surface as in old Aztec days; thus it happens many of the houses and churches are crooked. The foundations being swampy and insecure, earthquakes upset the perpendicular. 'Tis a city of crooked perpendiculars.

Dreadful smells issue from the open drains, and it is little wonder that the death-rate averages sixty per thousand. Looking down the new sewers one could see water four feet below the surface—black, filthy-smelling water. How strange, when one remembers the City was completely flooded a couple of hundred years ago, and again in a lesser degree since, the authorities have never moved it to higher ground. The natives do not seem to mind odours and want of sanitation, or the extraordinary sights one sees at every street corner

would not be permitted. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, but in these days of advanced civilisation, their indifference strikes a stranger as extraordinary.

On one occasion I actually saw a military band giving an afternoon concert round an open sewer! It was their habit to play every Thursday afternoon in that thoroughfare, and although the entire street was up, and black mud and drain pipes littered the pathway, yet the band found standing room among the débris, and, unhindered by awful odours, gave their usual concert, the Mexican Indians thoroughly enjoying the combined music and smells!

When digging at the back of the Cathedral, where the great Aztec Temple once stood, some wonderful remains were unearthed. I saw the great altar just as it was found in the black mud. It weighed some tons, and was almost perfect; indeed, it will be one of the most interesting relics in the Museum hard by. Skulls, cross bones, and other devices are carved upon it, forming a frieze a yard wide. It is one metre ninety-two centimetres wide in front, and the sides are one metre sixty-five centimetres in length. There are four rows of skulls, each row composed of seven skulls and six pairs of cross bones. The skulls are in profile, and the cross bones are short and thick. They alternate, instead of the cross bones being placed under the skulls as we are accustomed to see them.

The top of the stone slab was covered originally with skulls and cross bones of the same character, painted in blue and white, parts of which are worn off. At one corner is a niche in which were found several pieces of charred bone. Three steps led up to the monument from the front. It was evidently used as an altar, and in the opinion of archæologists who have seen it, was for purposes sacrificial. From its position it must have been near the great sacrificial altar of the main temple, was probably built some time before, and no doubt was one of the chain of chapels which

surrounded the main temple originally and were used for worship before the latter was completed.

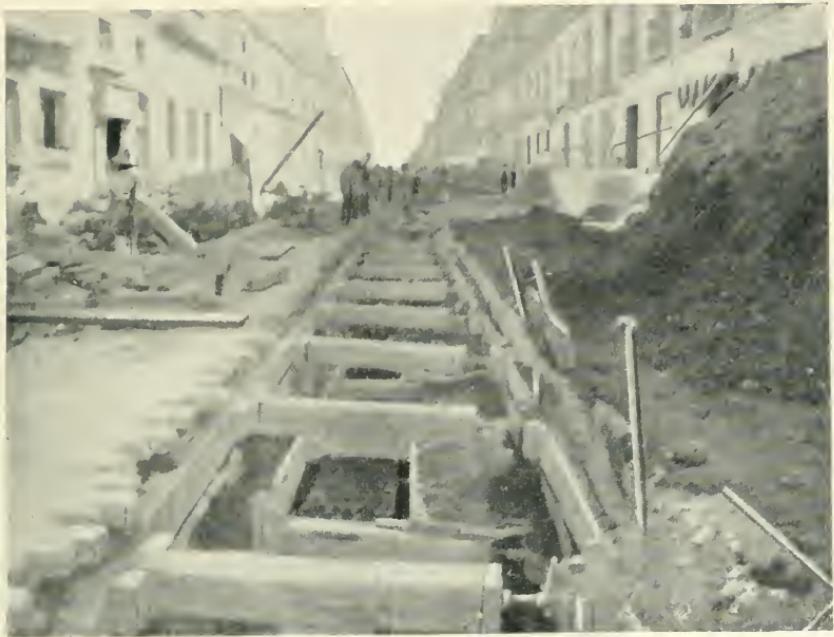
Father Hunt Cortés, a delightful priest of Irish extraction, and one of the greatest Aztec scholars in Mexico, declares that this altar was built by the conquered people of Cuitlahuac.

A hundred feet away was discovered another enormous stone, which looked like an engraved baptismal font ; but Señor Leopoldo Batres, the Government Inspector, said it had been used for sacrificial bones, and he believed the things he had found in that sewer were all prior to Montezuma, probably belonging to the 12th century. He gave me a couple of whistles, cut out of shells, found close to the altar.

A hundred years before the main Aztec Temple was built, side chapels, seventy-eight in number, were erected round the main site. Two of these side chapels—described by Sahagun as existing in the time of Cortés' invasion, were found in December, 1900, during the excavations in Escalilleras Street. They are the chapels of Fenecatl, the God of Air, and Teoymique, the Goddess of Death.

These have been by far the most important discoveries made for many years in Mexico. They included idols of all sizes, gold ornaments, a thousand jade beads—such jade had never before been found in Mexico, China being the nearest point—censers of pottery, in which incense was burnt. These look like frying-pans, in the bottom of which are holes to allow a draught, and the handles are carved with serpents' heads. Copal is still burnt for incense in some parts of Mexico in vessels somewhat similar. Fragments of copal, which still retain the scent, look like bits of limestone. Sacrificial knives were also found, calendar stones, coloured pottery, carved shells, and ornamented stones of all kinds.

It is supposed that the Aztec Temple and its chapels covered twenty acres of ground, and there is now an idea of

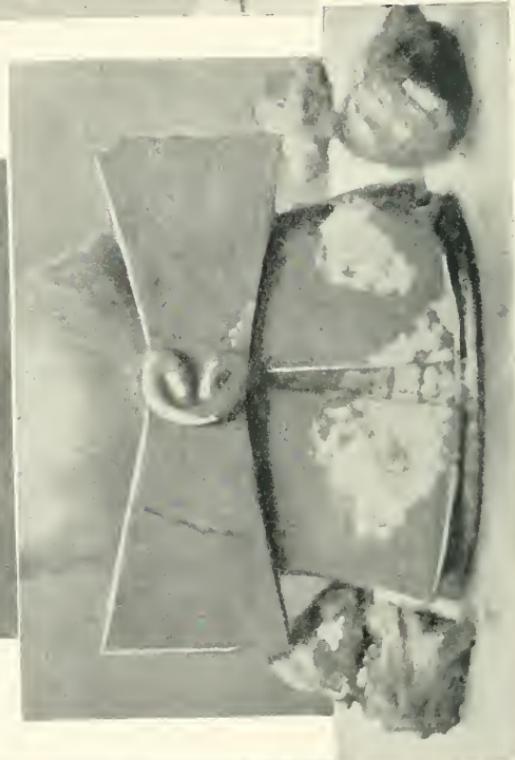
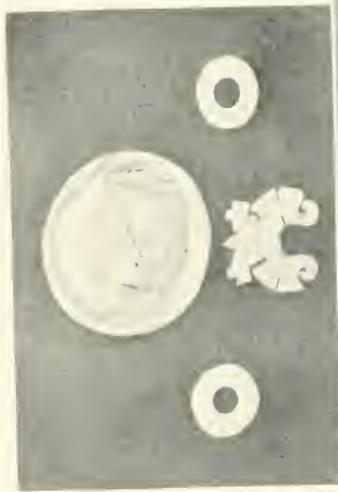


Drainage excavations, Escalerillas Street, in which over ten tons of Aztec treasures were found.



Aztec altar exactly as found in the drains.

Gold ornaments belonging to Nehcatl.



Indio Triste (sad Indian) so named from sad expression.

Olla in which burnt bones were found.

Nehcatl, God of the Air.



excavating in front of the present Cathedral and under the chief square of the town, in order to unearth the entire Aztec teocalli, and perhaps find Montezuma's lost treasure.

As soon as the first objects were discovered, Señor Batres was appointed to look after the work, and General Diaz wisely recommended a grant for the excavations to be pursued with care ; results have more than repaid the expense.

Two idols were first discovered, about thirty feet below the surface of the road. They represent *Xehecatl*, the God of the air, and his friend *Quetzalcoatl*. The former is not well carved, and is rather weird about the lower regions. Beside him were found gold jewels, earrings, a head ornament and breast-plate. These figures are fifty-six centimetres high, and stand on bases twenty centimetres square. Wonderful to relate, in spite of having lain for seven centuries in the wet mud on which Mexico is built, the colours upon these curious figures are quite distinct.

A number of skulls were found, the tops generally perforated with small holes ; probably they were some of the 136,000 human skulls, victims of war, which Cortés saw suspended upon a wooden frame-work. They are almost identical with the modern Aztecs, the frontal bones are nearly flat, and do not in the least resemble any Anglo-Saxon race.

The knives discovered, probably sacrificial, are of obsidian ; the spearheads of flint.

Twenty metres of the famous "Wall of Serpents" were exhumed, eight feet in height and very thick. It was unfortunately crumbling. Records relate that this wall (Coatepantli) entirely surrounded the Temple, and that at measured distances enormous serpents' heads were carved. Many of them have now been found. They are rudely carved, but none the less interesting for that. One of them was a metre long, by half a metre thick.

W. W. Blake, in his work on Toltec and Aztec antiquities, surmises that there were at least two hundred and eight of

these heads. "A serpent," he says, "in pagan monuments, is a sure sign of Phallic worship." So the ancients may have been as fond of pulque or its equivalent as the moderns.

When men were digging in the drains, amongst the various things dug up was a large earthenware *olla*, standing about a metre high, which had formerly been used for burning a perpetual fire in the temple. Originally painted blue and white, some of the colouring still remains.

One of the stone slabs is supposed to be a replica of the Book of Famine. The people were without seed, and when at last the rain mercifully fell, crops sprang from the ground; this slab was hewn as a token of gratitude. It represented the sun with streams of water issuing from the centre. The rock of famine itself has not been found, although described in ancient history.

The eagle, still representative of Mexico, dates from the old Aztec days. Indeed, among the treasures discovered in the underground workings was a stone with a carved eagle upon it. This was the date stone or almanac, and each animal represented a day or a month. Strangely enough, all but five of the days of the month were the same as in China, which again shows a connection between the ancients of Mexico and the Chinese people.

One of the gods was particularly fascinating. In his sitting position he seemed about three feet high. He was christened the Indio Triste, or sad Indian, a name derived from his pensive expression, and his countenance is certainly characteristic of the title.

A couple of stone cylinders, representing the Aztec cycle of fifty-two years (not fifty-two weeks), by which arrangement time was measured, as we mete out a century, were dug out. The first is one and a quarter metres high, the other about three quarters of a metre; both were perfect, and handsomely carved.



Replica of Book of Famine.

Aztec eagle.



Modern Indian in dug-out canoe, Viga Canal.

Aztec stone cylinders representing cycle of fifty-two years, by which time was measured.



Another stone slab found near the statue of Tlaloc, god of rains, is a good specimen of Aztec carving.

It would take pages to give a list of all these wonderful discoveries, which represent as much again as previously existed in the Mexican Museum; suffice it to say there were models of musical instruments, flageolets, drums, turtle shells made into drums, with stag-horns to beat them, and rattles. Strangely enough, the same kind of rattle is used to-day by the modern Aztec in the Sierra Madre for frightening birds.

These Aztec antiquities are to end their days in the Museum, which already contains the finest collection in the world. I was kindly shown over this Museum by Señor Jesus Galindo y Villa and Dr. Manuel Urbina, both officials who have written interesting books on the various treasures. So much for the past, now for the present.

Life has little value, and death many quaint interests, in Mexico. All corpses must be buried within twenty-four hours, as in other tropical countries. This necessitates considerable expedition, and owing to the enormous death-rate, everything is done to help forward speedy funerals.

Coffins are kept ready-made. In the case of poor people—and it is among the poorer classes one finds distinct manners and customs—one of the family goes off the moment his friend is dead, buys a coffin, or if too poor merely hires it for the day, after which, shouldering the ghastly burden on high, he walks home. One can see people any day carrying coffins.

The corpse is attired in all its best. A gentleman is garbed in his dress-suit, a lady in her newest silk gown, adorned with jewels, sometimes all the family treasures, although these are wisely taken off before the corpse is buried, to prevent theft from the dead body which would otherwise be speedily dug up and pilfered. Candles are placed near the departed, and the plate of salt so common

to all countries is well in evidence, reminding one more particularly of the Highlands of Scotland.

Until quite recently it was the fashion to bury all the dead clothed as nuns and friars, so reverenced was the Church, and at that time whole families were constantly employed in making such grave clothes for sale. Even to-day, among some of the more conservative families, the corpse is dressed in this manner. These grave-clothes are called *mortaja*, but the fashion is dying out, and "best clothes" are more universal.

Mexico boasts no ordinary hearse, with horses and black trappings. Every coffin, whether it belong to the rich or the poor, must go to its appointed cemetery on a tram-line in a properly-arranged car. These may be seen any day, at any hour, following the general tram-cars.

In the case of rich people a handsome black car is used, and flowers are put upon the coffin, which lies under a canopy, and behind this hearse on rollers comes the car conveying men friends; women do not as a rule attend funerals. The cemeteries are miles out of the town, and the mules gallop at a great pace; the second half of the burial service is read at the grave side, as no corpse is allowed to be carried into a place of worship.

Now occurs a strange ceremony; the coffin is never screwed down, it is fastened by a lock, secured with due pomp, the key being held by the chief mourner. At the grave side, before the coffin is lowered into the earth, the nearest relative unfastens it, so that the Manager of the Cemetery may look inside and satisfy himself it contains a corpse, which other friends identify, after which he relocks it. Opening the coffin at the last moment is enforced by law, to prevent murder or fraud. When the coffin is lowered, the key is given back to the chief mourner.

In the case of children a white car is used, and a doctor told me that in one instance which came under his personal

notice, a bejewelled child of ten was laid on a white satin pillow with a wreath of flowers upon its head, its lips and cheeks rouged, and its eyebrows marked in black.

What strange funeral customs this world can show ! Mexico has another weird and remarkable side. Those public funeral cars are most gruesome ; "sardine boxes" some wag called them. They are black wooden vehicles with three small doors in a row ; each door hides three shelves, one above the other, like a wine bin, and into these the hired coffins are run. At the top of each set is a chimney. I myself have seen a coffin placed on chairs in the street, waiting for the public hearse to come and fetch it. Behind this dreadful-looking hearse comes the tram-car marked "Funebre," into which the relatives and friends jump, and ride off to the cemetery.

✓ Poor people never leave a corpse till closed up ; they are afraid lest evil spirits should run away with it, or do it any harm, so they lay it out, place candles around, get in a large supply of pulque and settle down to a sort of Irish wake. They drink hard, sing, even dance and make merry. How strange that this should be the custom in so many countries far apart ! Indian corn on the cob is generally placed in coffins throughout Mexico, so that the dead may not be hungry on their way to another land, just as the Aztecs did thousands of years ago !

All Souls' Day is the great fête of the dead. From the first streaks of dawn whole families may be seen plodding to the cemeteries. They take candles and food, and spend the day among the graves. Masses are said, and a form of ancestral worship is practised, such as still obtains in China, and somewhat similar to what is prevalent every Friday (their Sunday) in Morocco, when the women enjoy their weekly outing by wailing over the graves of their Mohammedan forefathers.

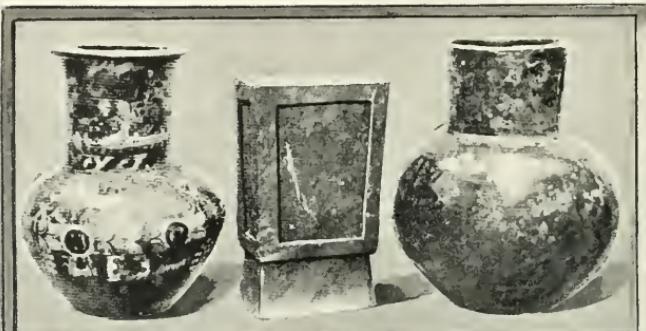
In Mexico candles are planted round the grave, lighted

and left to burn themselves out. Flowers are placed upon the tomb, and the family picnic close by, tell and re-tell stories of the dear departed whose death they have come to mourn, and whose virtues they wish to perpetuate. They leave the remnants of the feast behind, and dogs are muzzled that they may not steal food intended for the dead.

This feast of All Souls is one of the events of the year. In such places as Aguas Calientes, if there have been a death during the preceding year, an open coffin is placed in the room, and the bereaved family sit round it in commemoration, mourn and relate the good qualities of their lost relative. In other parts "dead tables" are arranged. Quite a line of these tables may be seen in a cemetery. A skull, bowl of holy water, and candles are essential, and whatever food, drink or smoke the survivors can afford. Sweets made to represent skulls, cross-bones, corpses and other weird things, find a ready sale during All Souls' Festival. These are called *Muertos*, and many of them are only made to commemorate the dead. Toys, too, are fashioned in the form of miniature coffins, funeral cars, skeletons and devils, as reminders to children that death is ever present. Professor Starr made a splendid collection of these strange things, and gave them to the Folk Lore Society of London.

The Cemetery of Dolores, one of many, is most picturesque, but it also has its weird side. For instance, visitors, mourners and coffins all arrive by tram! At the gates are lodges, outside which are seats for friends and trestles for coffins. Amongst the various notices posted up may be read :

First class grave, digging and tiling	10 dollars Mexican (about £1).
,, for children	5 ,,
Earth grave. Digging	1 ,,
First class grave in perpetuity	200 ,,
,, for seven years	60 ,,
Second ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	2 ,,
Sixth ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	Free.



1



2



3

1. Urns for cremated bones.
2. Spoons for burning incense.
3. Arrow heads.
4. Tlaloc, god of rains.

This is the gist of the announcement ; we saw its practical side later.

In the poorer part of the cemetery we came upon an acre of ground with hundreds of empty graves, so full, indeed, that there was barely a foot of earth between one set and the next. They were literally as close as possible. This ground had been cleared, that is to say the allotted seven years having expired, the tombs had been emptied—the bones removed, but bits of old broken coffins, which had escaped burning, still lay about. We saw piles of human bones later, thrust into caves or stowed away in great chambers made for the purpose. Skulls, arms, legs, every part, in fact, of what had once been living people, were all huddled together like mere rubbish.

✓ The Aztecs cremated their dead—but Catholic Mexicans keep the bones and burn the coffins.

In the better part of the cemetery flowers abound, red and pink wild geraniums, iris and arum lilies clustered everywhere. It seemed to be the fashion to mount a photograph of the dear departed into the headstone ; some of these pictures were weird ; they were generally photographs, much discoloured by age, but mounted right into the marble slab, and covered with glass.

Leaving the cemetery, we noticed masses of colour on one of the handsomest graves ; going nearer to investigate, we found that it was decorated with paper flowers, wreaths of bright pink, yellow, green or white artificial blooms. They were quite common things, made probably by the family at home, but oh ! so gorgeous. I was preparing to take a photograph of such strange trophies so incongruously coupled with the most solemn ending of life, when I heard voices, and going round to the other side of the grave, was surprised to find a picnic party ! Five people dressed in sad habiliments of woe, sitting near the head-stone with lighted candles beside them, were heartily

enjoying their luncheon. My photograph was never taken, although they all seemed so jovial they would probably have enjoyed the performance, but I passed on.

This queer picnic party had come out to the cemetery to honour a dead relative on his saint's *name day*; but somehow their clothes of deepest black, and the grave, seemed out of keeping with a picnic, and the decorations would have been more suitable for a Christmas tree.

On another occasion I saw a baby's strange funeral. It was proceeding along a country road. The mother carried an empty coffin, while the father bore his "angel" on his head. The child had been laid out on a board, dressed up to resemble some saint, such as San Antonio de Padua, El Santo Niño de la Dolorosa, or San Luis Gonzaga—a favourite method of procedure—and flowers and festoons hung all around the child, while above the little body was an arch of flowers. When they reached the cemetery, the "angel" would be put into the coffin and buried.

'Twas a touching scene I once came upon. A child had died; it was only a baby—eight or ten months old, perhaps—still, its little life was ended. It had opened its eyes on the beauties of this world merely to close them again. Its ears had heard the note of the mocking bird, smiles had played upon its features; but that note would never cause another flicker of pleasure. The child was dead, and the mocking bird's song was its funeral dirge.

Poor mother! She was only a child herself, little more than fourteen, and yet the chord of maternity had been struck, deeply, oh so deeply, down in her woman's heart. I looked at her mourning over her baby. Was ever more pathetic scene enacted in this world than the child-mother bewailing the loss of her baby doll? The little thing was stretched out on a grass mat, and sitting on her heels beside it was the poor mother who had given

it life. She was not crying. Some grief is too deep for tears ; she was barely moaning as she swayed herself to and fro and clenched her hands till the blood almost gushed from her slim brown fingers.

Poor, pretty little soul, how sad she was ! Her baby, her angel, was dead. There seemed nothing left now. It was all she had ; what were the few reeds composing the hut, or the bits of pottery ; what was even the little picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe above her altar, when her babe was dead ? The men would be in from the fields presently, and then the singing and noise and death rites would begin. Rockets and fireworks would be sent off to tell Heaven another child's soul was soaring to the angels. Now, however, she was alone, these precious moments were hers, all hers ; she was growing from a child to a woman over the corpse of her own baby !

✓ To turn to things more cheerful, the street cries of Mexico are varied and numerous. All day, from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. the cries may be heard.

“Gorditas de Horno,”—“Corncakes hot from the oven,” is a favourite cry.

“Toman nues,”—“Will you have nuts ?” which said nuts are sold by the sack load, from the street gutter.

“Carbosin,”—“Charcoal, sir ?” A few lumps, enough to fill one hand, are sold at a time, and serve to cook the family food for a whole day. They are placed in a soup-plate and coaxed into flame by a reed-plaited fan.

They have the strangest methods of brushing a room. To begin with, the housemaids are men ! They do everything.

To sweep a floor a wet duster is tied to a piece of stick about a yard long. This is merely flicked over the floor, and being wet licks up the dust. In a house, church, or museum, one often sees a man at work with his *drapeador*, which he rinses out in a pail whenever he thinks fit. Needless to remark, the corners of the rooms never get cleaned out ! In grand houses the floors are entirely carpeted (no parquet or rugs), and then a broom has to be brought into requisition.

When employers want to summon a servant, they do not

ring a bell, for the simple reason that there seldom are any, they just clap their hands. It sounded funny at first. A man would go out on to the balcony of the patio, and clap his hands, when at once a servant appeared.

Domestics do not live luxuriously ; they exist on tortillas, and hot sauces, and generally sleep rolled up in a blanket on the floor. In one hotel at which I stayed, the lady and gentleman occupying the room next to mine had a manservant. He wore Mexican dress, viz., very tight trousers, a gaily braided coat, and a silver-embroidered hat, the value of which latter was probably from £2 to £3 sterling. For days and days I watched that man. The rooms opened on a wide balcony with a garden below, and every day, for hours, he hung over that balcony, doing nothing but smoke, merely waiting to be clapped for. Sometimes he would put on his tilma, stick his head through the middle and curl himself up against his master's door, listening for orders which rarely came. I do not know whether he slept there, but I often saw him, even on a cold night, on my way home from a dinner party.

Mexico possesses every sort of climate, for it is nearly two thousand miles from north to south, or as long as from Iceland to Gibraltar. Almost every flower, fruit and vegetable known to man may be found within its boundaries, and every mineral this world produces has been discovered in the Republic.

Oddly enough, among the mammoth pre-historic animals in the Museum in Mexico City, are skeletons of horses and cattle, yet Cortés found neither. It is strange they should have been so completely exterminated, for we read that at the time of the Spanish invasion the Aztecs looked upon the horses imported by their conquerors with superstition and dread. Without that fear they would probably never have been vanquished.

Constantly in Mexico, one is reminded of the East. The

outside market in Mexico City might be the Soko in Tangier. The same enormous straw hats are worn, and a rebozo instead of a bernouse. The Indian women, with their babies on their backs, recall their Arab sisters ; both carry enormous weights upon their heads, and are either barefooted or sandalled. They have the same olive skin and dark hair, but the Arab is a finer specimen of mankind than the average Indian.

In both countries one sees public letter-writers at the street corners ; but in Mexico they sit, instead of squatting cross-legged as does a Moor ; there are the same medicine men, the same deformed beggars ; many of the superstitions are identical, but while the Arab becomes intoxicated by smoking hashis or kiff, the Mexican gets drunk on pulque. ✓ The religions differ ; but both races are equally devout and superstitious ; although one is Roman Catholic and the other Mohammedan, both go regularly to their respective places of worship and tell their beads.

One need not go outside the market of Mexico City to see the real native, in all his glory, surrounded by such flowers, such fruit, and such vegetables ! All have arrived by boat from the floating gardens a few hours previously, and here women, babies and dogs squat together, howl, shriek and bargain in truly Oriental fashion. It is all interesting, this strangely barbaric market, right in the centre of the modern civilised cosmopolitan Mexico City.

The doctors' stores are truly wonderful. Every conceivable herb and root is on sale, and each has its specific use. Rows of skinned moles and bats were hanging up, and we ventured to ask what they were for.

" To purify the blood," was the astonishing reply, " they cost one halfpenny (two cents) each, and are stewed and eaten."

" And what is that long, brown, bean-like-looking thing used for ? "

"Headache. You take out the seeds, soak them in wine, and lay them on the aching part."

Among the many and marvellous cures for disease is one for neuralgia; this consists of putting something on the nerve just above where the jaw-bone joins the skull, and one constantly sees people walking about with a patch of orange or lemon peel the size of a shilling on the affected temple. Nicotine from a cigar is sometimes put on a bit of paper and plastered on, or any aromatic leaf, and a piece of snake-skin is also much prized for headache.

An alligator's tooth is dropped into boiling water, well stirred round, and the mixture drunk to cure heart disease or the bite of a rattlesnake. Oak galls are ground up fine and put on sore places; ants' nests are not used for baths as in Finland, but are boiled and drunk to prevent hiccough or sickness. In fact the list of queer remedies is endless, and a medicine man or woman sells them in every market place.

Strangers in Mexico are surprised at night to see a small lantern standing in the middle of the road or at a street corner. It belongs to the policeman, who should be near; but if anyone can steal one of these lanterns and return it to the police station, he is well rewarded and the policeman reprimanded for negligence. They are signals for the mounted officer when he goes his rounds. That is all right; but the thief can equally evade this signal of the law!

Every policeman seems to have a dog. Generally some mongrel hound is curled up near the lantern. It is surprising to hear the policeman whistle. Every hour every man on duty calls in this way to his neighbour, and so the signal is passed on and on. By the same ingenious means a thief or a drunken person is handed from policeman to policeman, each constable only having to go to the end of his beat, where he gives the delinquent in charge to the next link of the law's chain till he eventually reach the lock-up.

Then there are night watchmen; these, however, no



Crucifix carved out of a living tree.

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Three Mexican policemen.

longer call out the hours. Big houses always have a watchman, who generally sits huddled up in a blanket on the front door-step, looking very sleepy, with his lantern beside him. Of course, they may be a protection ; but they appear old, decrepit and drowsy.

The first thing to teach a Mexican Indian is to be honest ; by nature he is a most awful thief. Warning :—take nothing to Mexico of value, only what is absolutely necessary, and never leave anything unlocked.) In the street the Mexicans will seize a purse or a brooch during broad daylight ; or take a man's pin out of his scarf ! Fraudulent notes and silver are in constant circulation ; short change is invariably given to strangers. All this is sad but true, and although I fear my Mexican friends will disapprove of what I have said, I hope they will realise the justice of my remarks, and do their best to teach Indians common honesty.

Look at the door-mats ; they are chained to the floor. Look at the seats in the chief shops of the City ; they are secured to the counter. Look at the ink-bottles in the General Post Office ; they are sunk down into the tables so that they cannot possibly be moved. Even the combs and tooth-brushes (yes, public tooth-brushes !) may be seen chained to the walls in hotels. Everything is done to try and prevent theft ; yet innumerable pawn-shops groan beneath the weight of ill-gotten property, kodaks, opera glasses, and endless articles stolen from houses as well as travellers' trunks.

I heard of one English coachman, who on going to Mexico found it terribly difficult to keep his sponges and curry-combs. At last one day he said in despair to his master :

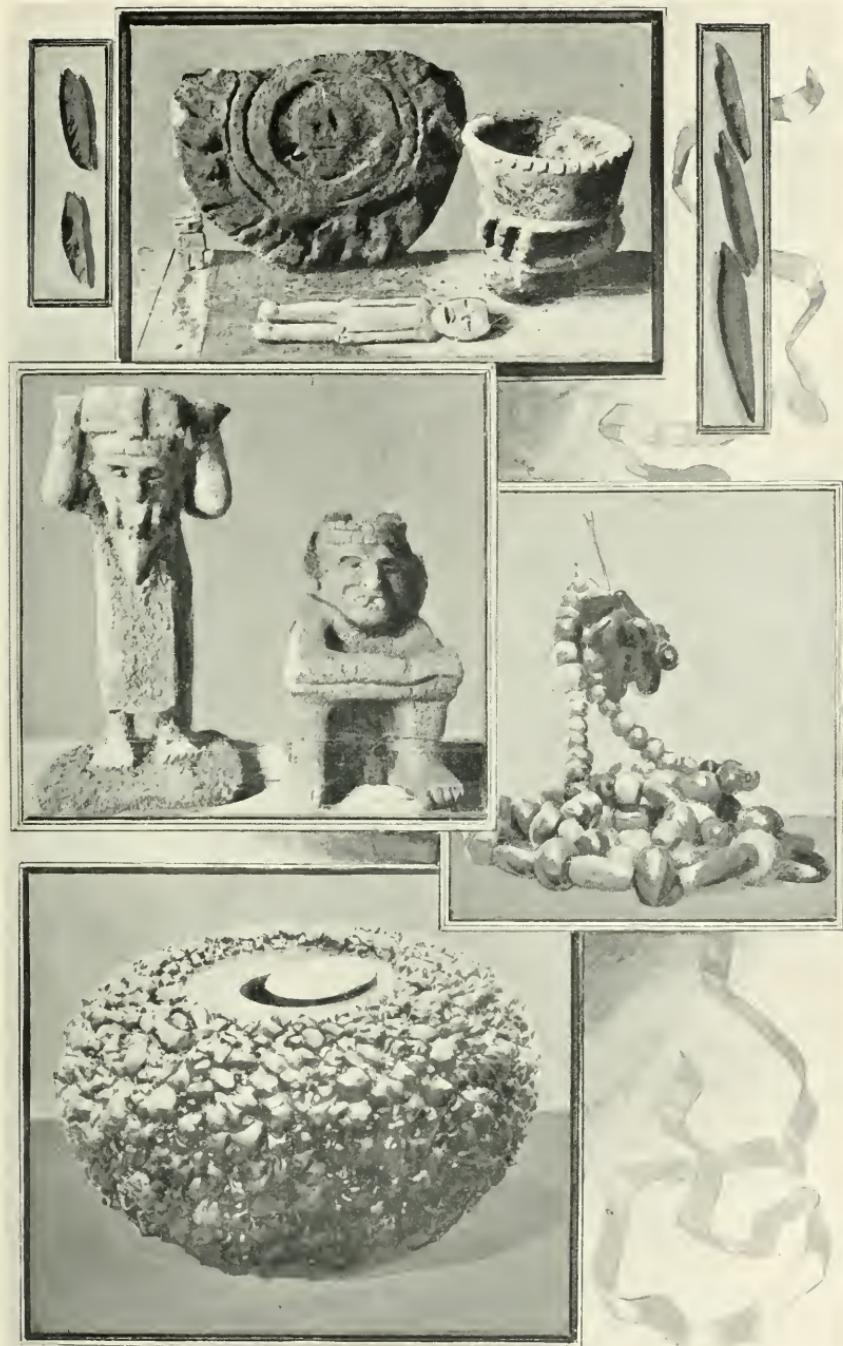
“ Lor', sir, these people would pawn their own mother, and steal the teeth out of their sweetheart's head.”

It is easy to steal and obtain money on the theft. Every street has pawnbrokers ready to receive goods—even the State has its pawn shops, the *Monte de Piedad* being the chief. When founded in 1776, it was endowed with 300,000 dollars. The idea was to protect people from the general pawnbrokers' usurious over-charge. No interest was exacted on a loan ; but when redeemed the owner was expected to give some suitable sum for public charity. Need we say the owner did nothing of the kind ? Consequently a nominal charge is now made. When the borrower fails to pay interest, the pledge is put up for sale ; if at the end of a month it has not been sold, the price is reduced, and so on till it is disposed of for the amount of the original loan. But now comes the wonderful part of the transaction. Supposing the article be sold for more than was advanced to its owner—that extra sum is actually handed over to that owner ! Thus the pawn shop does not gain anything beyond its small interest.

Surely this must be the only pawn shop in the world worked on such terms ; but as it is invariably crowded, the business appears to be a thriving one.

Minor pawnbrokers prove a veritable curse ; they are generally situated next to a pulque shop with its china, decorations and sour smells, and men pawn their rags for that extra glass which sends them reeling to their miserable homes.

To prevent theft of letters post-office boxes are provided. The postal system is still a little vague in Mexico. Letters going from one end of the town to the other sometimes take two days en route instead of a couple of hours, as in London. Besides, they occasionally get mislaid altogether. Consequently all business houses have their correspondence addressed to "Box So-and-so," at a certain post office. It is quite funny to see the rows of pigeon holes, with plate glass between them and the public, the number painted on each in gold.



Discovered in drains of Mexico city, January, 1901.

The glass enables the owner to see at once if there are any letters for him ; if not, he need not unlock his little box.

In the olden days it was quite customary for the burglar of the city to go to a certain Church on the outskirts of Mexico, called Virgin de Soledad, and before starting on some great robbery, offer up a prayer for success ! This prayer was known as *Oracion del Justo Juez*, and according to the value of the spoil, the Church benefited in candles !

This has now been stopped, but the Churches themselves with their crowds are still the happy hunting-ground of thieves. At Amecameca, when the pilgrims were toiling up on their hands and knees to that sacred shrine, an American friend was robbed of a valuable watch, spite of his coat being buttoned up !

This occurred on Ash Wednesday, when the famous Christ of the Holy Sepulchre, which, although life-size, only weighs three pounds, is carried from the shrine to the Parish Church with pomp and ceremony. On the bushes are to be seen bits of pilgrims' dresses, even hairs from their heads, left as offerings of devotion, and for *buena fortuna* (good fortune). Such is their religious faith, yet while worshipping with their hearts, the devout cannot help stealing with their hands.

The figure of Christ on the Cross is often represented by a black man. This was a compromise when Christianity was introduced in 1521, as being more likely to appeal to Indians than a white figure. In one of the finest churches in the City, one of the large crucifixes supports a dark-coloured Christ. Here I saw something which may be common, but which in all my travels I had never seen before, namely, an ordinary-sized wooden bedstead, with sheet, blankets and pillows edged with lace, standing in the Church. On it lay a life-size figure of Christ, after the Crucifixion, for marks of blood were on the forehead. Several worshippers were in the Church, and four of them devoutly kissed the

feet of this remarkable figure, which peeped out beneath the bed-clothing, and, strange to say, although the face of Christ was white, the feet were black, perhaps to conciliate the two races.

At Easter this gruesome-looking doll plays an important part in the Church ceremonial. It was terrible. Had the figure been artistic, the drapery beautiful, had it appealed to the best in one's nature, then kissing a block of wood might have seemed less dreadful ; but such a model, life-size, yet so unlifelike, those common sheets and cheap laces, and, above all, the hideous print coverlet, appalled me. The idea of the modern bed was ridiculous, but the homage paid to such an idol—for it was nothing more nor less—carried me away from Christianity to Eastern heathenism.

Hard by the examination room of the Preparatory Schools and University, where hundreds of boys are educated free of charge, are some exquisitely-carved stalls in cedar wood (it was formerly an old Jesuit Monastery) ; they are wonderful.

Education in Mexico is practically free ; including classes for instruction in the arts and trades, there are in the Republic 10,746 Government schools, with an average attendance of 545,000. Primary education is compulsory. There are also many private schools and colleges. In the City the Federal Government maintains the following institutions :—Academy of Fine Arts, School of Civil Engineering, School of Medicine, Law School, Academy of Commerce, Academy of Arts and Trades, Conservatory of Music, Military College, School of Mines, two Normal Schools for teachers of both sexes, also schools for the deaf, dumb, and blind. In the various States are similar institutions supported by the States' governments. Mexico annually expends five million dollars for the education of her people.

There are seventy-two public libraries in the country. The National Library at the Capital contains 265,000

volumes. At the present time Mexico issues more than 360 periodical publications, including the daily and weekly newspapers, besides magazines, literary reviews and organs of various industries and interests.

Side by side with advanced civilisation is barbarism. At the breakfast table every morning one finds the "Mexican Herald," printed in the English language. It is an excellent paper, with all the Associated Press telegrams, which have to travel over a thousand miles by special wire for the benefit of the readers of this enterprising "Daily." Here is the latest news, published almost as soon as it is in London or New York, and yet, though the editors are English and American, the compositors are all Mexican Indians, not one of whom knows a single word of the language he is setting up! He does it word by word from type-written MS., and really the "readers" are so careful that there is seldom a wrongly-spelt word in this hurriedly-put-together daily paper. President Diaz told me he had the telegrams translated for him every day! So the President is ever in touch with the world's news.

Mr. Paul Hudson, the manager, is a most enthusiastic scholar of Mexican manners and customs, who has edited an excellent guide. Mr. L. C. Simonds, an Englishman by birth, writes the English and political articles, and Mr. E. M. Conley, formerly on the staff of the "New York Sun," undertakes the archaeology. It is a wonderful little paper, and to its contributors I am indebted for much useful information and help.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW CENTURY.

ON the last day of the nineteenth century, as I sat writing far, far from home, and right up in the clouds, so to speak, such is the altitude of Mexico City, my thoughts naturally turned to the new era so soon to dawn.

The position of nations in this world's history changes with the centuries. Each in turn seems to mount the rungs of the ladder, to reach the summit of power, and then gradually topples over. That great Eastern civilisation of thousands of years ago in China, where is it now? Multiplied in numbers, deteriorated in force, dwindled in power.

Germany and the United States have marched boldly forward during this rapidly-expiring nineteen hundred. France has slowly and surely stepped back. England is being jostled by America, and if she do not wake from her lethargy will speedily find the younger country outstripping her in every race, as she has already done in so many. Let our manufacturers go over to the States and see how machinery is made by machinery, and when completed how that machinery is again worked almost entirely by machinery. They will then learn how to vastly increase the output of work and decrease the labour enormously. This means multiplied business, cheapness and success. Trade Unions paralyze England, and, in spite of her present success, "trusts" bid fair to ruin America, but in the meantime she flourishes.



Jockey Club Patio, Mexico City.

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What will the new century vouchsafe? Will Mexico take her place among the prominent nations of the world? Should another Juarez or a second Diaz arise she will undoubtedly do so, and why should not such men grow from the children now playing at marbles on her vast territories?

Mexico has wondrous possibilities. In her mineral wealth, and agricultural produce, she possesses much to make her great. She is vast in size, and thinly populated; her past is romantic, and the future lies before her like the blank pages of a book on which she may take up her pencil and write what she pleases. Who can foretell the future? Perhaps in a hundred years Mexico's may be one of the voices that rule the world.

That wonderful new harbour at Vera Cruz, the Tampico port, this railway across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the various routes projected to the Pacific Coast, all, all are combining to help forward the development of the land of Montezuma.

The more one sees of Mexico, the more one realises what a marvellous country it is. Its climate varies from tropical heat to almost Arctic cold; every fruit, vegetable and flower appears to grow upon its soil; its mineral wealth is still unknown; nevertheless, after nearly six months spent in the land, under the most favourable circumstances that could possibly fall to the lot of woman, I feel convinced of two things. First, that it is not yet the place to which an ordinary English labourer should emigrate with his family; wages are too low, in spite of there never being a sufficient supply of men for the demand.

Secondly, that it is a good field for the accomplished artisan, provided he will first work in some minor position in which he can learn the language and customs of the country, before taking thither his wife and children. French chefs, English coachmen and butlers, English

nursery-maids, find employment readily at good wages; while from end to end of the Republic drivers, guards and brakemen are nearly always English-speaking men.

Turning to the better-class folk, I ought to mention Mexico is not the place for a weak boy inclined to drink or play cards. The country and climate would simply spell damnation for him; but for any lad with a good business head and some training there are endless openings.

At the same time I have met sad instances of inexperienced youths landing with a few hundred pounds, who, hoping to achieve immediate fortune, had been duped and their money lost. In fact, for any one to invest anything in Mexico until he really knows something of the country and its manners and customs, can but be considered sheer madness.

There are endless sources of development, and the Government is doing all it can to help. Shops kept by foreigners seem to answer well, in spite of the enormous duties exacted. Practically everything is imported—china, glass, clothes, wine, tinned foods, drugs, etc., for the reason that until lately there have been no home manufactories. At the present time cotton, however, is being spun and made into shirting; bricks are burnt, and here and there each trade is finding a pioneer representative; although agriculture and mining will naturally remain the chief industries of Mexico. There is, however, yet another possibility, for the fuel oil fields known to exist have not yet been exploited.

Fuel is one of the greatest wants of Mexico; only latterly has a small quantity of coal been found. The forests are chiefly cabinet wood, and by their rapid destruction much harm has been done. The exports of cabinet wood in 1898 amounted to £176,993; in 1899, £201,886. This is all right, but to burn these precious woods is a shame. For example, in the time of Cortés, the valley of Mexico was warm and fertile, and the conqueror acquired a sugar plantation of great value, which he bequeathed

in his will. The climate has changed since the destruction of the forests ; it has become colder and drier. The hills now are bleak and bare, sugar will not grow for miles further south, and the cold of Mexico Valley is extending over the Republic wherever trees are being indiscriminately cut down.

Mexico possesses everything but cheap fuel ; once provided with that, which she may be ere long if the oil fields are worked, she will become a manufacturing country.

There are many rich people, millionaires in fact, who live in veritable palaces. The homes of the two Escandon families, situated on each side of the Jockey Club, are simply splendid ; patio after patio, stabling for twenty or thirty horses downstairs, suites and suites of apartments ! The numbers of servants kept by these old Mexican families is surprising, forty or fifty for one household ! Many of these servants have been in the family all their lives, and their parents before them ; (but the Mexican servant, though faithful, is lazy, and two only get through the same amount of work as one ordinary European.)

The country houses also are wonderful — often old monasteries changed into sumptuous mansions. They contain corridors, patios and cloisters in abundance, and such flowers ! Hardly in gardens, for the lovely blooms practically grow wild, only the grass borders, lawns and roadways requiring attention. Southern Mexico is indeed the land of flowers, but, alas ! they perish in a night.

“ You pluck the flower, the bloom has fled.”

Armfuls of gorgeous roses, huge bouquets of wonderful flowers are an everyday sight ; but they have little scent, and die in their vases ere morning. Exquisite masses of colour, wondrously brilliant blossoms, but almost all without perfume and strangely perishable.

The people loved and tended their flowers in their

floating gardens in the days of Cortés, and now, five hundred years later, they are doing precisely the same thing.

The New Year is a special festival in Mexico, and a day for the exchange of cards and flowers. I was particularly fortunate, and among other kind presents received a bouquet of the most exquisite "American Beauty" roses from the President and Madame Diaz. Below are the cards which accompanied it.



Porfirio Diaz, that was all, no "President," no "General," nothing but those words, *Porfirio Diaz*. Could anything be more simple, more unassuming, more characteristic of the man himself?

During the last hours of its life, the bells of the City tolled a sort of melancholy wail for the old year and departing century. At midnight I attended Grand Mass in the Cathedral. It was an imposing ceremony from its

strange contrasts. The Cathedral is a fine structure, standing where the old Aztec Temple stood hundreds of years ago, and that night it was crowded. Some of the richest and grandest folk in the land were there, ready to receive Holy Communion after the elevation of the Host, together with some of the very poorest, and, oh dear! they can be poor in Mexico City! As we entered dust and incense caused the place to look as though filled with fog; a sort of weird mystery pervaded the whole scene. In front on a red velvet cloth lay a massive wooden cross, probably twelve feet long; at its foot was a silver tray to receive alms, and all round were ranged enormous lighted candles. Thousands of persons passed before that cross on the last night of the nineteenth century, and kissed the wood of which it was made. It reminded me of that long line of worshippers on Easter Sunday who filed past to kiss St. Peter's toe in the Church of that name in Rome. We were thousands of miles away from Rome, yet here was a similar ceremony enacted by others of the Catholic faith.

In the middle of the Cathedral only were there any seats, and the people therefore knelt on the floor, while many prayed with outstretched arms, or huddled into corners against the great stone pillars. Dozens of dogs and hundreds of babies were in evidence.

Two scenes impressed me greatly. One was a group of very poor Indian women, dressed in their two simple garments, arms and neck bare, yet among them they had bought a candle! At the rear of the Church, where it was darkest, this little group of five was kneeling. One held the candle, which lighted their features; another a book from which she read her prayers, repeated by the others, who in all probability could not read themselves. Two of this party had babies tied to their backs, one of whom was asleep with its little head hanging down at the side till it almost

touched its small feet. The other baby cried at intervals, but its mother had come to pray, and had no time to soothe the infant, so by way of stopping its wail she gave the tiny creature a sort of hitch-up every now and then, accompanying the jerk with some remark. The last of that devout little group had a collie dog, which sniffed around from one to another, and as it did not seem inclined to settle down, the women patted and let it through into the middle of their little circle. There for an hour they prayed—that ring of five women, two babies and a dog, illumined by a solitary candle. What a group! What a picture! How delightful to witness their honest faith. Yet there was another side to it all, for my friend had a beautiful pearl pin stolen from his scarf while we stood watching that group!

The other worshipper who particularly interested me was an old man. He looked rich and prosperous, and selected a quiet spot for prayer near the choir stalls. He had invested in quite a number of candles, which burned in a row before him, while to my certain knowledge he prayed with both hands extended for over half an hour. He was old, and his arms must have ached, yet he prayed on, happy in the belief that the purchase of candles and the penance he was performing would bring him nearer to his God. Happy old man!

He was only one of hundreds of devout worshippers, for had not the Pope bidden every Catholic open the new century with prayer?

Official instructions had been received from Rome detailing how Roman Catholics were to observe the ceremonial of the closing of the year and the century on the night of December 31st. The decree from the Pope was addressed to all the world.

“Now that the present age is drawing to a close,” it began, “and a new one is about to begin, it is highly proper that all who have been redeemed by Him in every part of the world should be solemnly consecrated to the King of Ages, Jesus Christ, in order

that thus gratitude may be shown for the special favours from Him in the past. What our holy father granted a year ago by anticipation he also permits by the same decrees of the sacred congregation of rites, viz. : That at midnight, which ushers in the first of January of the year 1901, the most august sacrament of the Eucharist may be exposed for adoration in churches and chapels, and that in its presence one mass for the feast of the circumcision of our Lord and the octave of the nativity may be read or sung, and that, moreover, the faithful by special privilege may receive holy communion either during or outside of the mass. While thinking of some new means of increasing the piety of the faithful in connection with an event so solemn, the holy father learned that many prelates and pious sodalities anxiously desire that the faithful of Christ, moved by an eagerness to participate in the rich treasury of spiritual indulgences, should everywhere be invited to come and adore the most blessed Eucharist. As this was in most perfect accord with his own wishes the holy father has benignly granted that a plenary indulgence may be gained to all the faithful of Christ who, having properly approached the sacraments of penance and received holy communion in a church or chapel where the most holy Eucharist is reserved, shall spend any full hour they please between midnight of December 31 and the noon of January 1, before the most august sacrament exposed to public adoration, and shall, moreover, offer pious prayers to God for the intentions of his holiness.'

It was a most impressive service, yet very sad. The black dresses of the ladies, the mantillas, the weird mystery of haze caused by the incense of copal gum, the wail of children, the mournful music, everything tended towards depression, despite the gorgeous robes of the priests and the glitter of candles. For me the new century dawned amid the most picturesque surroundings, with a friend of my childhood beside me ; but everything seemed strangely sad.

As the clock struck twelve the bells rang out ; but somehow they were not joyous bells that ushered in the new century. There was something most depressing in their tone. The organ did not peal forth in glorious exultancy, but a piano and a dozen acolytes' voices performed a strange dirge or chant. It was sad, but not imposing ; dull, but not inspiring. Holy Communion followed, and we emerged about 1.30 a.m. into the bright, crisp wintry air, to walk home beneath an almost blue-black sky, in which the moon was shining clearly, and, oh, so far away that same moon had been shining on dear ones at home but five hours previously, and passed on with England's dawn from them to us.

What a century the nineteenth had been ; the “science” century surely. During those hundred years what wonders had been discovered ! Railways, telegraphs, telephones, electric light, traction and motor cars, phonographs, wireless telegraphy and Röntgen rays ! Why these things alone have revolutionised the world.

We had seen the twentieth century dawn ; we should not see it die. What wonderful things, what marvellous inventions and discoveries may not this century give birth to ? What will happen in Mexico ? Ah, if we could only lift the veil of the future and peep behind !

My last night of the old century was passed amid Indians and incense, in the strange gloom of an old Spanish Cathedral. The first evening of the new era was spent amongst wealth and jewels, aristocracy and laughter.

Probably the most beautiful building in Mexico City, with the exception of the churches, is the “Jockey Club.” It is an old palace dating from the sixteenth century, built of those wonderful Puebla tiles, which evoke such admiration, and which modern machinery cannot copy. They are slightly irregular and bulge in the centre, the yellows and blues are beautiful shades, and fill the artistic mind with enthusiasm. The Jockey Club has a lovely patio, with palms and plants, containing a charming old fountain, typical of the ancient Moorish style of Spain. It is the Club of the town, the home of light and learning, and undeniably the haunt of vice. I use the word “vice” deliberately, for the nightly play is very high, especially in the baccarat room. Till five and six o’clock every morning men are losing or winning large sums of money. Gambling is the curse of Mexico, alike among rich and poor. I have actually seen children of five and six years of age bringing their farthings to gamble in the market place. Yes, I emphatically repeat gambling is the curse of Mexico.

Look at the grand Jockey Club and its baccarat table,

where play continues every night till the small hours of the morning. Look at the religious feast of Guadalupe with its pilgrims, who pray on one side and gamble away their last cents on the other, and then pawn their blankets or hats in order to obtain more to fling away in like manner. Look at the licensed gambling hells in every town, controlled by a ring of rich men, fast growing still more wealthy. Go into one or two in Mexico City, and see the tables groaning under the weight of silver dollars. One thousand pounds in silver is upon each of those tables, and more in the bank if needed. Men and, alas, sometimes women, with their books and their systems, will sit there all night, only rising after a turn of ill-luck to partake of the supper which is provided free. Champagne and French cooking gratis, add another inducement to play, and yet the visitors do not see how heavily the tables must win to make such gifts possible.

Yes, in those dens anyone may have his champagne of the best without charge; indeed, he is encouraged to take it, because after a few glasses the world looks different. Luck must and will change the gambler thinks, and feeling refreshed and more hopeful, a regular dare-devil in fact, he returns to the tables to risk his all in another flirtation with Dame Fortune.

He loses. No matter, he must not pawn his things in the rooms, the law forbids that; but if he have played in one of the gambling halls outside the City he is given a free ticket home again! These tickets are claimed nightly.

The gambling tables are the property of, or licensed by, the State, and large revenues are annually received from them.

At any street corner an old man or woman, a lame man or a child, will offer you lottery tickets for sale. They form one of the institutions of Mexico; indeed, on every side the cry of the lottery ticket seller is heard.

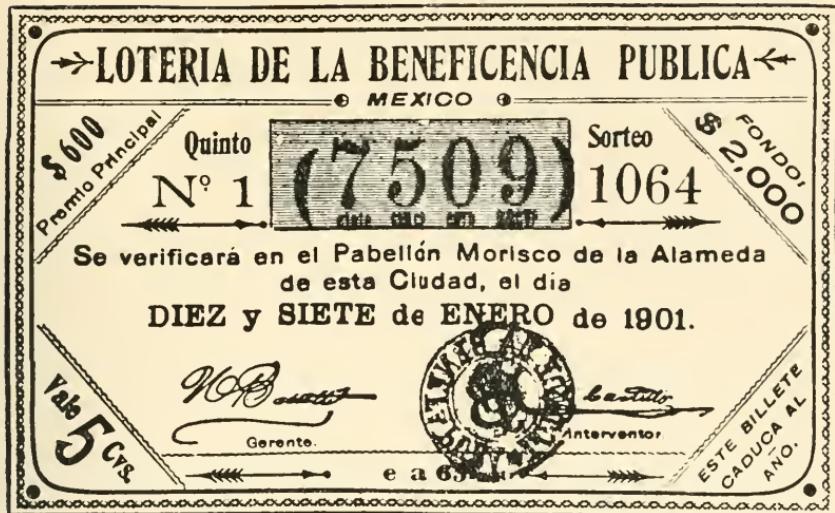
The great Government Lottery, held twice a year, is

drawn on May 5th and December 31st. The value is 50,000 dollars, and a whole ticket costs ten dollars.



Then there is the Public Benefit Lottery. A whole ticket costs four dollars, and is drawn once a month for 60,000 dollars. A two-dollar ticket for 10,000 dollars is drawn twice a month, or a twenty-five cent Mex. = (six-pence) for 600 dollars is drawn every week, and this ticket can be divided into halfpenny parts, and with these the poorest try their luck. The white tickets are five cents each.





These tickets are drawn in a kiosk in the chief garden of Mexico City, namely, the Alameda. So wherever one goes, lotteries and gambling meet the eye and ear.

The Jockey Club Ball proved an enormous success. It was given by the members of the Club to Cármel Romero Rubio de Diaz, known to all Mexico as *Carmelita*, in commemoration of her husband's re-election for the sixth time to the Presidency of Mexico.

The invitations were for ten o'clock, and when we reached the blue-tiled mansion, a few minutes after that hour, everyone was already there. The house with its quaint Puebla tiles looked lovely. In the patio a military band was playing among the palms. The staircase was decorated and everything was done to pay honour to the wife of the President.

The Mayor gave me his arm, conducted me into one of the long suites of rooms, and solemnly placed me next to Madame Rincon, Madame Limantour, Madame Braniff, and others whom I knew. Then he departed. I looked round. Both sides of that drawing-room, and the two succeeding drawing-rooms, were lined with women! Not

one single man was to be seen. Each male person brought a lady, deposited her on a seat, and fled! Two hundred and fifty men waited in the gallery outside, whilst two hundred and fifty women sat gravely lining the rooms inside!

What good-looking women they were, too! Such faces, figures, jewels and dresses would have done credit to Buckingham Palace! The ladies of the older Spanish families wore most wonderful pearls and diamonds, precious stones that had been in their families for hundreds of years, but the girls had no jewels of any kind. Both men and women appeared small. They are descendants of the old Spanish settlers; the women average about five feet two inches, and the men five feet seven inches (my own height), so that I always felt gigantic at such gatherings.

Punctually at 10.30 the band struck up the National Anthem, *Himno Nacional*—which resembles the *Marseillaise*, and is only played for the President himself, except on national feast days—and then General and Madame Diaz ascended the stairs. Madame Diaz entered the room first, on the arm of Señor Limantour, Minister of Finance, and the President followed with Madame Braniff. Everyone rose and bowed, no one curtsied, however, as with gracious smiles the Presidential party, followed by the Mexican Ministers and the Club Committee, filed in. Madame Diaz took up her position before the sofa, and various ladies approached in turn to say “How do you do?” to her. When my turn came, I laughingly said :

“I am very fortunate, Madame, in that you are having this ball while I am here, for it is a lovely sight.”

“We are fortunate in having you at our ball, and I hope it will fill your mind with pleasant recollections.” This in English, and said with the most perfect grace and charm. Madame Diaz looked lovely that night in pale green silk with exquisite lace, and ropes of pearls hanging about her neck. To Mexico she is what the Empress Eugénie was to

France, a beautiful and clever woman, dignified in manner, and stylish in appearance. She is many years younger than her husband, and supplies all the graciousness which so fittingly accompanies his rugged strength.

General Diaz is not a Society man, but he did his duties that night as if he liked them. All the Ambassadors wore their Orders, the General none ! After standing a few minutes beside his consort, the order for dancing was given, and away whirled the giddy throng. The President then went round to have a chat with his friends, and for a couple of hours, until supper was announced, he walked about talking affably to everyone. He was most gracious, hoped I was having a good time, and regretted he had not sent the promised photographs. He had not forgotten them, and had written to various Governors whose States I intended visiting later on, to ask them to look after me. This thoughtfulness from the unapproachable Diaz !

The ball was on New Year's Day, and hearing it was proper to visit Madame Diaz that same afternoon to wish her a happy twelvemonth, and on this occasion a happy century, I had ventured to call, and at the same time took the opportunity of thanking her for the exquisite bouquet of roses which she and President Diaz had sent me the previous night. Several of the Diplomatic Corps were there ; but when I left she herself accompanied me to the top of the staircase.

"I want to tell you," she said, "that I have read your Father's Memoirs. The President liked the stories I told him at dinner, especially the Crimean incident." After more charming references, and a kindly handshake, I left.

The Diaz house in Cadena is by no means the finest in Mexico, far from it, the beautiful homes of the Escandons and a dozen others are finer, but then Diaz is not a rich man, and his town house is his private residence.

On entering the patio the same performance was repeated as on my first visit. One is ushered up the marble staircase; at the top a footman wearing white gloves and English livery is waiting to send one on to the next man, standing at the hall door. He bows one into the drawing-room, but does not ask the name, and visitors simply walk in unannounced. Of course the hall-porter below knows whom to admit, and once his sacred barrier is passed all is clear sailing, and the most cordial welcome vouchsafed. Madame Diaz has no receiving day; but New Year's Day was a special occasion. The General had held his public receptions at the Municipal Palace in the morning. Hers were merely friendly visits.

What a happy home life that must be, when the door is shut on official business!



Church domes.

C H A P T E R X V.

GUADALAJARA.

THE new century had dawned. My travels into the further unknown were to begin. What experiences some of those travels proved!

Guadalajara is perhaps one of the quaintest old towns in Mexico. It has its history, what town has not? Battles have been fought and blood has been shed in its valley, but to-day modern civilisation is struggling with ancient barbarism in this interesting land of grand contrasts.

What a pretty name—Gua-da-la-ha-ra—rich and musical, as are so many native names. As the nomenclature of Mexico is poetical and melodious, so the people are artistic and romantic. All the charm of a southern clime is to be found; at one moment the scene might almost be in Italy, at the next the Spanish Pyrenees recur to mind, and then again dear dirty Tangier appears before us. The mules, the burros (donkeys) with their pack-loads, the blue cloudless sky, the dark skins of the Mexican Indians, the white cotton clothes and bright-coloured blankets—all these we have seen in other lands. Mexico recalls a hundred different scenes; even the domes of many of the churches with their gold tops and coloured tiles are reminiscent of far-away Russia. It is all very interesting, and strange combinations abound; barbed wire, electric light, telegraphs, sewing-machines, and a telephone may be found in a little village where the term “savage barbarism” would hardly sound out of place.

As diversified as the country are the friends one encounters whom one has known in other lands.

In the spring of 1900, in England, I was spending a few days with the Robert Flemings at Chislehurst, when a nice, grey-haired American arrived upon the scene. We chatted over dinner, and I mentioned Mexico, and my intention of travelling thither during the following autumn.

"How strange," he remarked; "because I have a good deal to do with that country, in fact, I am the Chairman of the Mexican Central Railway." Thus by a strange accident I met Mr. A. A. Robinson, who subsequently proved a friend in that far-away continent. Little did I then guess what a splendid line he controlled. It was in his private car that I visited Guadalajara and Tampico, the trip being kindly arranged by Mr. Nickerson, the Vice-Chairman of the Line, in the absence of Mr. Robinson, whom I met again later.

In Guadalajara one quickly notices that the inner patios possess exquisitely-wrought iron gates. What a field for the artist! The massive carved-oak doors thrown back, the dark arched entrances, the lace-like work of the iron gates beyond, through which the sun glints after kissing the scarlet, purple and lilac bougainvillia, or playing hide-and-seek among the petals of the roses. There in the patio are wild arums, tuberoses, tangles of pink and red geraniums, orange-trees laden with flowers and fruit, the banana with its grand leaves, while clustering near grows that handsome plant, with its dark crimson flower, resembling the old English "Love-lies-bleeding," but which is a castor-oil tree. Butterflies of gorgeous colouring flit over the blossoms which entwine themselves in that wrought iron work.

Guadalajara is famous for its pottery, and yet we saw better Guadalajara ware everywhere else in Mexico rather than in the town where it is made! They had there, however, some delightful figures modelled by the Indians,

representative of every kind of native life, which were excellent, and reasonable in price.

In this town we saw a man who had lived in three centuries. He was an old Indian, born—according to the parish register—in 1798, and therefore (this being the year of grace 1901) this funny old gentleman had entered his third century of life! His broad cheekbones, toothless gums, tanned, wrinkled skin and white hair—somewhat unusual colouring for an Indian—made him a remarkable picture. He was hale and hearty, bubbling over with fun, yet Schopenhauer would have us believe happiness is only a delusion of youth and childhood. Perhaps it was his second childhood; at any rate, he was ending his ancient days merrily in the *orphan asylum*!

It is such a clean town, so free from smells and impurities, and the valley so fertile, that Guadalajara appears to have a great future before it.

In the Cathedral is a fine painting of the Ascension of the Virgin, by Murillo. It seemed strange to come across one of this great master's works in such an out-of-the-way little place. The French knew its value, and tried to take it away in the time of unhappy Maximilian, but the priests removed it from the frame and hid it safely, so the picture hangs to-day in the little sacristy.

In England, if we divide a house so as to make two out of it, we number the one 16, and the other 16A. In Mexico they say 16 and 16½. Another custom which strikes a stranger as peculiar is, if a house chance to be "for rent"—as our Yankee friends would say—to hang any old scrap of paper in the window; it is not necessary to write on it, the fact of a bit of paper being there means that the house is to let.

The masons have a singular plan when building; they always work "below the cross," that is to say, they stick a wooden cross—often three or four feet high—above the

place where they are working, and every morning cross themselves, and say an Ave Maria before starting their labours. If they die after that—and it is easy to fall from a scaffold in Mexico—they die happily, all the more so as they probably catch a glimpse of the cross while breathing their last. Scaffolding is never nailed nor screwed, it is merely tied together with rope made from the fibres of the cactus, or occasionally from the hair of a horse's tail. Scaffoldings of this loose and weird nature are sometimes four storeys high.

A workman may often be seen carrying his cross while proceeding to some new building. He erects it over his head, and as the floors rise, the cross has to be moved higher also, for he must always work "below the cross" for protection.

In a mine, before the men burrow any distance into the earth they dig out space for a little shrine, set up the cross, and when the shift (set of men) go to work, they stop opposite to this shrine and say their Ave Maria, which acts as a sort of moral bath, and brings them strength and consolation. Then again a cross usually stands on a bridge to prevent the devil from passing over it, and a cross may likewise be found at the entrance of every village to keep out that dreaded gentleman. The cross is an old institution ; the Aztecs built crosses thousands of years ago in Mexico, long, long before the time of Christ.

One may encounter a crucifix anywhere on the road-side put up to commemorate a death, as in most Roman Catholic countries ; but here that symbol also denotes the resting-place of a coffin. Churches are often far apart, and the friends of the dead bear the coffin on their shoulders, and at each spot where they pause to rest a cross is erected, as was the case at Charing Cross and thirteen other places between Lincoln and London, when the body of Queen Eleanor was brought for burial to Westminster Abbey, in 1291.

Turkeys wander about the streets of Guadalajara—not wild birds, but flocks—for sale. A house-wife, hearing the well-known cry, rushes out, chooses her turkey, buys it, and perhaps orders the salesman to wring its neck and pluck off its feathers. The more wary housekeeper takes her turkey into the patio, feeds it for a week, and only puts it into “mole,” stew with chilli, when plump and fat. It is interesting to note that the turkey is indigenous to Mexico.

The life of the street varies like a kaleidoscope.

The water in Guadalajara does not run through the streets in open drains as in Durango, it has to be fetched from the public pumps, as in Spain. The queerest wheelbarrows and delightful jugs of brown ware convey it to the different houses, where it is sold by measure.

The “milk-cart” is a man on horseback ; he wears the national dress, his coloured sarape hangs across his legs, and on either side dangle a couple of big tin cans, from which he sells milk as required.

Wood is sold by the bundle, logs, such as we burn in grates in England, and three such logs cost one farthing. Wood round Guadalajara is plentiful, and cheap enough to burn in the engines, a rare event in Mexico, where till quite lately most of the coal consumed came from England. Now, however, when various new coal fields are being developed in Northern Mexico, it is not likely Newcastle will in future export any large quantity of fuel to that country.

Mexicans love seclusion ; all the grand homes are literally walled in. Suppose a man possess a beautiful house standing in a lovely garden ; an Englishman would probably put up an iron fence, through which the passers-by might have the chance of enjoying a glimpse of that garden ; but this is not the case in Mexico ; one might be in a land of prisons, so high are the walls, and a single gate is the only entrance, as the great carved doors form the only entrance to a town house. Back door there is none.

" My garden is for my own use," said a Mexican friend, " not for the entertainment of everyone I do not know."

There was a modern market in Guadalajara, too clean and sanitary for beauty, and also a delightful old open-air one, where every salesman sat under an umbrella or shade of matting, each more primitive than its neighbour. Here a number of tropical fruits were on sale.

There were several wonderful restaurants in this market, not mindful of London, Paris, or New York, but infinitely more picturesque. They consisted of a brick or solid stone stove, behind which a woman cooked ; on the stove were brown earthenware pots of stewed turkey, chilli sauces, and tortillas. She had also frijoles (beans) in stew, and before her on the stone bench squatted men and women who, at a cost of from one to three farthings, enjoyed a splendid meal, which they shovelled into their mouths with the help of their tortillas. Curiously enough the black bread of so many climes is quite unknown in Mexico ; even the poorest people eat white rolls if they have bread at all.

Then there were butchers' shops, before which hung red flags to denote their trade, together with what resembled innumerable large rosaries, which turned out to be small sausages ! Every shop or stall had a sacred picture somewhere, and many of them a little shrine among the wares.

Honey seemed a great feature ; it was cheap, but a common hock bottle into which it had been run for us to bear away to the car cost 12 cents, or threepence, that is, half as much as the honey itself ; someone had better start a bottle factory in Mexico. He would make a fortune !

Guadalajara was interesting and quaint, its flowers lovely, but after a couple of days' visit we ran an hour back along the line so far as Atequiza, which is only a coach drive from the famous Chapala Lake. Our car was shunted on to a siding to await our return on the following day, and off we started to spend a night beside those famous waters.



Our coach, Lake Chapula.



Guanajuata.

Stay, let me describe that diligence! It was not exactly a Lord Mayor's coach, although adorned with scarlet and gold. It was not a furniture removal van, although almost large enough for one. It was not drawn by white mice, as some lady's fairy coach is reported to have been, but its eight mules, though almost small enough for mice, possessed the strength of those lions who still wander at large in Mexico.

Mr. C. R. Hudson, an official of the railway, likewise Mr. Augustin Temple, a walking encyclopædia on Mexico, and I scrambled, yes scrambled with difficulty on to the box seat, for there were no steps, the wheels were high, and the seat as inaccessible as the top of a Fifth Avenue omnibus in New York, on which I had a glorious ride a few months previously, although when half-way up (by the Dewey Arch at Broadway Corner) I wished I had never begun the ascent, and wondered whether to go on or come down. I decided to persevere, and ruined a pair of white gloves in the attempt. No one knows what climbing to the top of a Fifth Avenue 'bus means who has not tried it, and our diligence was the same sort of adventure; but in wilder Mexico best clothes were no more, and fashionable New York Society was not looking on, so it was all fun and not embarrassment. Mrs. Hudson and her sister preferred to ride with eight others inside that weird coach.

We mounted to our seats eventually, and before us sat the driver holding six reins and a whip, his feet resting upon the brake; next to him was his "help" with two whips. The first was short, to tickle up the last two mules, the wheelers in fact; the driver's whip was long, to chastise the four mules abreast, and the help's second whip was some twenty-four feet long with a short handle. He amazed me by slashing so dexterously with it that he hit the two leaders quite easily, for our team consisted of eight mules. Many an expert four-in-hand driver would give a good deal to use his whip as cleverly as the Mexican Indian drivers;

but then it is said no white man can ever ride, drive, or pack a mule properly !

It was a glorious drive through the mountains to Chapala Lake. We galloped most of the way, bumped over bad roads and swung round corners in a manner which would surprise many folk. The sun shone brilliantly, the "help" suggested the "parasol"—our good old English word of Latin origin—and accordingly pulled up a cover, such as a baby's perambulator possesses, and tied it down to the foot-board with a piece of stout rope. Every now and then something went wrong with the brake ; down jumped the help, hatchet in hand, and with a block of wood about a foot square, of which we carried about a dozen ; he hacked the old one off, and then proceeded to tie the new one on. No coach in Mexico ever proceeds far on a journey ere requiring some repairs of this sort, and the "helps" are wonderfully clever in arranging such trifles. "Done," he called, and off the driver started, leaving the poor help hanging like a fly to the step, just to watch that all was right with the new brake, and then he scrambled back on to the box without our drawing rein.

The driver was really a genius ; he managed his eight mules controlled by six heavy reins, continually whipped up the four middle animals and worked that heavy brake, even while we were going down hill at a gallop, with his foot. His leg was all twisted round outside his foot-board, and to get more purchase on the brake, his "helper" pressed against his near side to add to the weight. The heavy old coach hanging on thick leather straps swung from side to side ; boulders on the road, rivers across the path and such-like trifles nearly sent us flying from our seats ever and again ; but nothing really happened, it was all in the day's work, and nerves are not permitted in Mexico. Eagles and hawks flew overhead, and in the distance we saw Colima, one of the few active volcanoes in Mexico, some ninety miles

away, and only about sixty miles distant from the Pacific Coast.

We stayed at Chapala, where there are sulphur baths on the lake of that name. Whether those natural springs induced the folk to wash, or whether they did so on account of its being Sunday, I know not ; but everywhere was cleanliness. Spotless linen was worn on all sides ; women, stripped to the waist, were washing their clothes in the stream ; washing was on every side. After six months' sojourn in Mexico I can honestly say I consider the natives are most cleanly. In the country, by a lake or stream, they are always washing and bathing, and only in the squalid portions of the towns does dirt exist.

On one day of the year at least every man, woman and child in Mexico bathes, namely, the 24th of June, which, it will be remembered, is St. John the Baptist's day. This yearly bath is taken in honour of St. John, who chose baptism by total immersion as his symbol of penitence and purification. In Edward VI.'s first Prayer-book we read that "the prieste" had "to dyppe the child in the water thryse."

There is one part of their bodies they neglect, however, viz., their heads ; they have not learnt the value of paraffin, as applied in hospitals, and five, six or even seven people will sit in a row like ninepins, searching for the animals which seem indigenous to neglected locks. It is not a pretty sketch, but so true a picture of Mexican daily life that it cannot be omitted.

Several times we passed folk riding pillion ; generally the woman sat sideways, the man astride behind, and they jogged on as contentedly as did our forefathers in the Highlands of Scotland, who rode pillion to kirk to be married.

During our exciting drive to Chapala, several strange trees arrested my attention. To prevent the cattle from stealing the fodder, Indian corn is put up into the

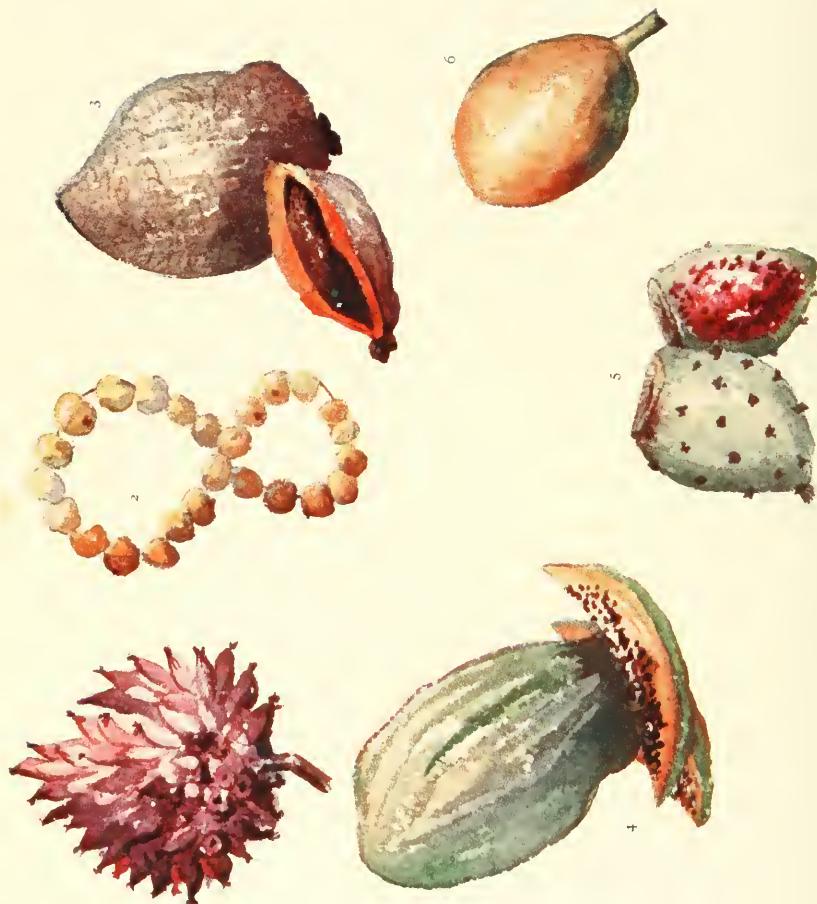
forked arms of the trees. One sees a nice large tree, which looks as though it were in extraordinarily full leaf, and on drawing nearer discovers that there is a hay or rather a corn-stack, among its boughs!

The waggons on the road were all drawn by ox teams, such funny waggons, too ; just ribs of bamboo, the sides being kept together with matting, or hairy cow-hide, yet the wheels were massive blocks of wood. The poor people cannot afford to buy wheels, spokes are difficult to make, and a good solid trunk of a tree can be sliced into a number of convenient wheels. They look heavy and cumbersome, but they work and wear, and after all that is what is wanted. "Time was made for man" suits very well in Mexico, as does the Finnish proverb, "God did not create hurry."

A family removal, and what a family ! There appeared to be about fifty of them, and perhaps there were, for Mexican families—even of the highest rank—live together in a manner that is perfectly incomprehensible to English ideas. Dozens of members of this family were stowed away behind the matting walls of the cart, and as the team of oxen drew up for us to pass, every fold of matting was raised, and out popped two or three heads. It was very hot, and what the temperature must have been inside that cart we shudder to think. The few worldly goods possessed by these folk were on another waggon ; men sat on the top with fowls tied by the leg, pigs or cats in their laps, and bird-cages hanging over the edge of the cart.

We passed ; the waggon drivers took their long sticks with spear points at the end, prodded those handsome old oxen, and on they plodded.

Some boys were larking by the roadside over their mid-day meal, their horses being tethered near by. Something displeased one of them. In an instant there was a flash of steel, and each youth had drawn the sword or *machete* which



1. JACONOXTE, like a bunch of large radishes. Bunch larger than a man's head.
2. TEJOCOTE, tiny wee apples, only the size of cherries.
3. MAMILL, russet coloured, thick skin, about 4 inches long, with one large brown seed which is used in the country for polishing cloths.
4. MELON ZAPOTE, small green melon which grows on trees in clusters like cocoa nuts. Has hundreds of black pips like hard currants.

he carried. The quarrel ended in nothing; but the rapidity with which swords were drawn, and the fact that each youth carried one, showed the temper of the country.

Chapala enjoys a glorious climate, tropical vegetation abounds, and birds and beasts from every clime shelter along the shores of the lake when they are driven southwards by the cold. Innumerable orchids clustered on the trees. There are great tall plants, twenty or thirty feet high, of bourganvillia—flaming red, lilac and purple—also geraniums, palms and cocoanuts.

Delicious fish abound in the Lake, which is about eighty miles long; they are caught in nets. These pescado blanco (white fish) are literally transparent when they come out of the water. They are spoken of as lake herring, though I cannot say I thought they resembled a Loch Fyne herring in taste so much as a river trout.

Below is a rough table of the commoner birds, beasts, and plants of Mexico, given me by a sporting friend:—

Birds.	Beasts.	Plants.
<i>Egret</i> (native home).	<i>Lion</i> (panther).	<i>Guamuchil.</i> A large tree which resembles the apple. The fruit is a long green pod containing white pulp over seed; it is delicious.
In winter, all migratory	<i>Tiger</i> (jaguar). Very dan-	<i>Pitahay.</i> A giant cactus
<i>Duck</i> and <i>Pelican</i> and	gerous.	which bears fruit about the size of a peach, re-
<i>Swan</i> of North America.	<i>Timber-wolf</i> (dangerous).	sembles a pocket with
<i>Wood Duck.</i>	<i>Boyote</i> (small like a fox).	thorns outside. The in-
<i>Muscovy Duck.</i>	<i>Bears</i> (three kinds).	side tastes like strawberry.
<i>Turkeys</i> (three varieties).	<i>Badgers.</i>	<i>Nopal.</i> Prickly pear.
<i>Pheasants</i> (five kinds).	<i>Raccoons.</i>	<i>Mango.</i>
<i>Quails</i> (three kinds).	<i>Opossum.</i>	<i>Lima Dulce.</i> Sweet lime.
<i>Humming-birds</i> (sixty	<i>Dabali</i> (wild boar).	<i>Melon Zapote</i> , which grow
kinds). These are bri-	<i>Deer</i> (three kinds).	on trees in clusters.
lliantly coloured in	<i>Antelopes.</i>	Hundreds of small black
plumage, are fly-catch-	<i>Squirrels</i> (five kinds).	pips like hard currants.
ers, but do not sing.	They are wonderfully	<i>Aquacate.</i> A vivid green
<i>Parrot</i> (six common varie-	good eating.	lemon used in salad.
ties).	<i>Tapirs.</i>	<i>Granadita</i> , the fruit of the
	<i>Alligators.</i>	Passion Flower.
	<i>Crocodiles.</i>	<i>Chico Zapote</i> , a sort of
	<i>Manatee</i> (a small kind of	mango, really the fruit of
	hippopotamus which	the gum tree from which
	lives in swamps).	chewing gum is made.
	<i>Big-horn Mountain Sheep.</i>	A brown fruit, the colour
	<i>Ibex.</i>	of a potato and shaped
		like an orange.

The black, white and red plumage of the giant wood-pecker is a wonderful contrast to his ivory-like beak. It is an Indian superstition that the short red feathers from the head will cure all diseases if worn in the ears, consequently these birds fetch high prices. They are rare, and difficult to shoot, that being probably the reason why the superstition has arisen, and they are so highly prized.

In the evening we went out to look at the moon, on Chapala Lake—one of those lovely moons all lakes know so well how to reflect. In front of the hotel door we saw a weird figure with a flaming torch in his hand, apparently looking for something on the ground. What had he lost?

“I am burning ants,” was his reply; under a wild fig tree—as big as an ordinary horse-chestnut—these ants, big as bees, had made their home. They came out at night, whole families of them, each one carrying a little leaf he had purloined from the tree, and this dark gentleman with his torch of resin was burning them wholesale. He swept his death weapon remorselessly along the ground, and up the sides of any wall where he saw a family of ants promenading, and we heard them cremated. They looked almost as large and brown as those delicious oyster crabs which frizzle on to one’s plate at Delmonico’s. But these Mexican ants are really a plague, for they will strip a tree of its entire foliage in one night.

What a lovely evening that was at Chapala. How gloriously bright the moon, but I felt homesick, and Moore’s beautiful lines came back to me:—

“The best charms of nature improve
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.”

What truth lies in those two lines. Of course, the “strong-minded woman,” the “elderly scribe,” ought never to feel lonely or homesick; but I did, and in such peaceful hours as these, or in the gay throng of some large

reception, trouble came upon me. The greater the crowd, the more public the moment, the more I longed for my own kith and kin to share its pleasures with me. Stupid but true!

How much happiness or misery lies in a mattress. In Normandy, Brittany or Holland one gazes up at the feathery mound reaching almost to the ceiling, and looks anxiously for the ladder by which to mount so high, but oh, what lovely beds they are when one gets there, if the weather be not too hot for feathers!

In Norway one bumps one's feet or one's head against the wooden bedstead, made as small to-day as it was when the old Viking ship (now in Christiania) was built, and a traveller has to acquire a habit of curling round before he can rest at all comfortably on a bed in that country, where the feathers are on top, as they are in Germany, instead of below as in France.

A Mexican bed also has its little peculiarity ; it *may* be of brass, of iron, or wood, but the mattress—judging by its hardness—is of the same substance as the frame. Weary limbs ache, but a hard bed, some wiseacre remarks, “is so healthy !”

That healthy hardness is not all the trouble, however, the sheet and the blanket are cut exactly the same size as the bed, consequently when the weary traveller gets in, his toes get out ; he pulls the covering down only to find that he is uncovered to the waist. He turns over, his back is bare ; he rolls over, the other side is exposed. It is exactly like sleeping under a pocket-handkerchief !

The sufferer complains—I did, at all events.

“Oh,” said a Mexican friend. “You did not roll yourself up properly. You must wind yourself round with the bed-clothes ; they are not meant to hang over. Of course not.”

The stranger endeavours to follow this advice ; but lifelong experience is necessary to enable the possessor of an ordinary frame to roll himself round snugly into a towel.

Then the pillows—ah, those pillows are something to be remembered. They are not down, not even feathers, or horse-hair or pine-needles—they are solid wool. Just nice, fat, hard knobs of wool. You can stand on them, and they do not give ; you can play football with them—no pumping up is necessary ; they remain as hard and firm at the end of the season as they were at the beginning.

A stiff neck. Oh, what a stiff neck! And not only a stiff neck, but a stiff back and aching limbs await the foreigner pretty often in dear old Mexico. But folk who travel have to put up with small discomforts, and those who cannot accept them with good-natured grace had better stay away, not only for their own sakes, but because they will mar the pleasure of everyone else. We travel to enjoy ourselves, to look for the best in all things, not to grizzle over our experiences, still we pray leave to be allowed a little joke concerning them occasionally !

Trifling pleasures give most enjoyment, just as small ills are the least endurable.

Of all the towns in Mexico, Guanajuato (pronounced Wan-a-wah-to), interested me the most. Rome was built on seven hills—Guanajuato was built in seven valleys or barrancas, and the result is most strange. The valleys are long and narrow, therefore the town is sometimes only one street wide, and yet it straggles along for nearly five miles in length.

Every form of ancient and modern architecture is to be found there, from the old adobe dwellings with their flat roofs and Biblical appearance, to the magnificent modern theatre. Flights of steps, hewn out of solid rock, lead from the main street in every direction, and a donkey (burro) thinks nothing of walking up or down those stairways. The shops have no fronts, only a large opening in the wall, and a horseman rides under the arch, buys what he requires, and backs his steed out again. It is a town full of surprises



Mummies, Guanajuata.

—a Spanish town with a strain of barbarity and a tinge of modernity. For hundreds of years it has been a great mining centre, which it is to the present day. Look at that cavalcade of a hundred burros laden with sacks of ore slowly trudging down the mountain to the smelting works.

The tram-car, drawn by four sturdy mules, plies up-hill for five miles from the station at a gallop, and as we ascend we leave the old world behind us—the water-carrier with his enormous earthenware jar on its wooden base, the women sitting fanning their sweets with many-coloured strips of paper for hours together to keep away the flies, the queer open farriers' shops where strange little horses are being shod, the coffins borne through the streets to fetch the dead, the enormous oak beams men—nearly bent double by the weight—are carrying on their shoulders, the open house doors through which one can see the Christmas altar still standing in one corner of the dark little room—or a picture of the Guadalupe Virgin plastered on the door to bring good luck—all this we leave behind, and at the summit of the hill find handsome villas and lovely gardens, the homes of luxury and wealth.

Many of the houses are built right into the rock, the basalt forms their back. The bottom floor is only one room deep, but as the hill slants the second storey may be two rooms wide, and so on. The houses literally cling to the mountain side as limpets to rocks.

By way of cheerful entertainment we walked to the cemetery. It was a climb, and oh, we were hot, for the midday sun in January knows how to burn. Our visit was to the mummies.

In the cemetery the soil quickly mummifies the corpse, as in certain parts of Finland and Norway.

In Guanajuato the earth shrinks the body and turns it dark brown, until it resembles a mummy. When the corpses are dug up to make room for others, the best are kept for

the corridor of mummies. A man standing beside us was asked if he knew any of them.

"Si, Señora, the third on the right is my grandfather," he answered quite cheerfully.

During the last year or two white cotton garments have been hung upon the corpses because it is considered "nicer," so there they stand, the men on one side and the women on the other, just as do the old monks in the Church at Rome.

There is yet another similarity to Rome in this old Mexican town, the entire cemetery is surrounded by a high wall, and this wall contains square apertures for the reception of the dead. One can be bought or hired, and the corpse with or without a coffin is slipped in and bricked up. It reminded me of the Columbarium at Rome, only the latter is far the more sanitary and poetical, containing ashes of the cremated dead instead of decomposing bodies as at Guanajuato.

Guanajuato is certainly the most artistically picturesque town in Mexico.

Our next journey brought us to Querétaro of sad memories.

The Emperor Maximilian was shot at Querétaro (pronounced Kay-ret-a-ro), but apart from that fact the town is certainly well worth a visit. It is a queer old place, composed almost entirely of one-storey buildings; all the houses are built alike, but differ in colour, and with the various bird-cages hanging at the doors and the people sitting in the gutters or lolling on the door-steps, they appear quite different. Every odd man in the street seemed to have opals to sell; they are found in large quantities and are sold by handfuls in the streets by stray vendors. Of course, a purchaser must take the risk of the stones being good, bad or indifferent. An Indian steps forward, produces a little black rag or bit of velvet from his pocket, undoes it in the palm of his hand, and offers the lot of opals for a few shillings.

It was the same at the station, and again at Aguas Calientes. The platform was thronged with sellers of opals or drawn thread embroidery worked by the Indians round about, and sold at wonderfully reasonable rates, some of the specimens being exquisite.

A vast amount of buying and selling is done at railway stations, probably half the shopping of every Mexican town is effected there or in the streets. The large open spaces opposite the Cathedrals, Sundays included, are full of gorgeous handkerchiefs, laces, ribbons, sweets, fruits, or earthenware, all of which articles may be seen exposed for sale on the open road. Apparently tradesmen pay no rent!

Another amusing arrangement is the delivery of bread or washing; both articles are put in baskets six feet across, and ten inches deep. The white rolls and crescents are piled up until the stranger wonders how they ever keep in place, and these baskets, balanced on men's heads, are carried through the streets every morning. The same method is followed with the washing, but starched dresses, petticoats and other such garments, are pinned on so that they may hang down to avoid being creased. Inside is the man; but often so completely covered with starched goods that he looks like a "Jack in the Green" or a John in the blue!

It is worth going to Querétaro to see one church, namely, Santa Rosa. The exterior is handsome with well-carved, beautiful doors, as is the case with so many Mexican churches, while inside is probably some of the finest gold lacquered wood to be found in the world. It is not a large church, but the workmanship is exquisite—splendidly deep carvings are thickly covered in gold leaf, here and there lovely shades of green, like the sheen on the wings of a parrot, mingle with the shades of gold and brown, and tortoiseshell is thinly laid over other parts to add richness to the effect. Even the confessional boxes are lacquered and

carved in the same way. Time and money were not spared on this masterpiece of art by the Spaniards three centuries ago, but, alas! the great altar is gone. The French destroyed it, stole the gold said to have been worth a million and a half dollars, and burned the carvings; yet enough remains to well repay a visit. Of course, there are cheap paper flowers and ugly little wax figures, the usual strange blending of tawdry finery with solid majesty! The carving, however, cannot be spoiled.

What wonderful things the Roman Catholic Church achieved in the past; what encouragement it gave to art, literature, science and learning! How much the world has to thank those old priests for; but the younger generations do not seem to follow in their footsteps.

The term "a city of domes" might well be applied to Querétaro. It is a minor Moscow. The domes are round and tiled, and the effect in the evening light is beautiful, seen from the spot where Maximilian was shot.

As we were walking along the street at noon on Sunday, a band accompanied by a number of persons attracted our attention. It was a bull-fight procession.

There were the picadores, matadores, capeadores, butcher and chamberlain, all marching through the streets to the strains of music, followed by half the population of the town. This was the advertisement for the afternoon's fray.

It was in Querétaro that I first saw much of the Rurales, a remarkable corps of soldiers or police, but whose more intimate acquaintance I was to make a few weeks later when escorted through the State of Morelos by its Governor and a guard of forty mounted soldiers.

These Rurales are the pride and pick of the army. They are a perfectly unique institution which exists only in Mexico. Their origin was strange. When General Diaz came into power, it was to rule a country occupied by tribes of bandits, whose fathers and grandfathers had been bandits



Rurales, the only body of soldiers of the kind in the world.



Water carrier, Guanajuato.

before them. They plundered, caused revolutions, and were a strong force for good or ill, generally the latter. General Diaz recognised their power, admired their great moral and physical strength, and decided to make use of their knowledge of every hill and dale in the land. He offered amnesty, suggested that he would organise them into an army corps with regular pay at a higher rate than any other cavalrymen in the world. They were to keep order and subdue revolution, theft and riot. The bandits accepted his proposal, and became Rurales.

No finer body of men could be met with ; they are now the backbone of the country. They have no fixed abode ; each State has its band of Rurales, and they go where required, or when disturbances and troubles break out, for even to-day such things are not unknown in Mexico. Each State has its mark on the grey silver embroidered hat, for example, E^o (Estado), M^s (de Morelos) ; the uniform is always grey with red ties and wide belts ; brown leather saddles and bridles from which red tassels dangle, embroidered trousers (chaparreras) ; and the Rurales are armed with pistols, machete (sword) and rifle.

Instead of going to the bull-fight, we watched the Rurales ride past, and then took a drive.

A mule-car ride—or rather gallop—of an hour through a well-grown orchard district—planted not with apple, pear or cherry trees, which we expect an orchard to contain, but oranges, lemons, limes, mangoes, bananas, and other semi-tropical fruit—brought us to a queer little village. On dismounting from the tram, and turning a corner of a street, we suddenly found ourselves looking over a wall, attracted thereto by the laughter behind. It was a public bath !

A large square swimming-bath where men, women and children were enjoying themselves—very lightly clad—beneath the blue vault of heaven. It was really a pretty sight ; fathers were teaching their little olive-brown off-

spring to swim, youths were having races, diving and disporting themselves as to the manner born ; old women were sitting on the steps while their daughters washed their heads or feet. Everyone had his own soap, and used a bountiful supply before beginning his aquatic capers. Although it was a warm spring bath, it was full of little fish, who were swimming around gaily, much to the amusement of the children who tried to catch them.

A wide flight of steps—the whole width of the bath—descended directly into the water, from a wider platform, behind which was a kind of covered-in shed. Here under a roof the good folk undressed, but as there was no wall in front they were quite in the public gaze, nevertheless they all did it so modestly, and with such an absence of assumed nonsense, that it seemed quite natural. At the same time if a few wooden boards were put up, the men could be divided from the women while performing their toilets. Such a simple arrangement would not cost much, and might make matters more comfortable for both sexes.

That they should bathe together seems only natural to them, and anyone who could see those happy family parties enjoying their Sunday dip would think so too.



Burros (donkeys). Cross to keep away the devil is depicted on the wall.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN AND EMPRESS CARLOTTA.

THE modern history of Mexico is so very modern that many of the persons who helped to build it up are still alive, and some of them have kindly told me a few of their personal reminiscences of the Emperor Maximilian and Empress Carlotta.

In the history of Mexico there is nothing more interesting or pathetic than this episode of Maximilian and his Consort. It was indeed an evil moment when he was tempted to listen to the proposition of Napoleon III.!

Reared in Imperial pomp, a refined and cultivated man, with a devoted wife, he was living in peace at Miramar, when first approached on this subject. With a woman's instinct the Archduchess at first turned a deaf ear to the proposal, but as her husband became enthusiastic at the prospect of a glorious future, she grew reconciled, and they started on their ill-fated journey to Mexico full of hope, after bidding farewell to their lovely home, and the happy surroundings of their native land.

In Mexico they were warmly received, even the Indian population greeting their new Emperor with manifestations of joy, for, believing in the legend of Quetzalcotl, they looked upon him as the fair white man who was to come from the East to rescue them from their oppressed condition.

The religious question was still the trouble in 1863. Although Juarez's government had endeavoured to settle this difficult question, it partly failed. At first it seemed as if Maximilian would be able to cope with the matter, but it soon became evident he was weak and incompetent. Under his rule evil passions were permitted to get the upper hand. Consequently the situation soon became more difficult, for it needed a stronger individuality than his to steer the storm-tossed barque of Church and State into tranquil waters.

Colonel George M. Green, a Canadian by birth, played no unimportant part in these troubled days and the final overthrow of Maximilian. When I met him he was a smart-looking, well-preserved man about sixty years of age. It appears strange that he, being a British subject, should become a Colonel in the Mexican army, but the whole thing occurred quite naturally.

Educated for an artist, the venturesome lad when about seventeen conceived a desire to journey with his daguerro-type camera—a new invention in 1854—to Mexico, and take views of the fighting army. After his arrival he joined the Liberal side, headed by Juarez. Young Green left Guadalajara with the army in 1858. At first all went well; he had his carriage and his implements, and secured many excellent pictures, some of which were published in *Harper's Magazine*.

At the battle of Salamanca the young artist was taken prisoner.

"I had a bad time of it," said Colonel Green; "they tied me arm to arm with a low-born Indian, and for two days and a night we were marched, almost without rest, with a string of other prisoners, to Leon. Of course I lost my kit and apparatus. They treated us horribly; we had scanty food, great fatigue, and no consideration of any kind. When we reached Leon I was called before General Miramon (executed later with Maximilian), who asked why

I was fighting against the Holy Catholic Church. I told him in the little Spanish I knew that I had not been fighting at all, but was only a Canadian artist.

“‘Then the sooner you get out of this country the better.’

“‘But I cannot,’ I replied, ‘I have lost everything and have no money.’

“To which he sternly answered, though he had heard I had been talking against the Church, yet in consideration of my youth he would not have me shot if I left Mexico within fifteen days. Later he relented a little more, and ordered a horse and saddle to be given me.

“With a heavy heart, but glad to be still alive, I started for Aguas Calientes, where the American Consul, William Banks, offered me protection, and promised to try and get back my worldly possessions.”

A few days later young Green was again taken prisoner by Miramon. This proved the turning point in his career. He escaped, presented himself to Vidaury, the Liberal General fighting on the side of Juarez, and was immediately offered a post in the Cavalry. Naturally the adventurous boy became fired with enthusiasm, and turned aside from the artistic career for which he had been trained to the exciting life of a soldier, and not only a soldier, but one who was destined to see years of bloody warfare, and play his part in history.

Colonel Green was the only English officer in the Mexican army, and although a Briton in appearance, is thoroughly Mexican in sentiment.

At the time young Green joined, the management of an army was a very different affair from what it is now. There were no railways, and enormous distances had to be traversed on foot or on horseback. The army lived upon what they could pick up, and the soldiers’ women folk, acting as a Commissariat body, scoured the country on the line of

march, raided the ranches and villages, taking what they needed in the way of food. At the end of the day's march, the soldiers' wives would have tortillas and stews ready, which were much appreciated both by tired officers and men.

The war of Reform lasted over three years, and many sacrificed their lives for the liberty of their country.

In 1865, a year after Maximilian was crowned Emperor, Colonel Green went to San Francisco on a Government commission, to procure a band of volunteers to aid Juarez, who had overthrown the religious orders two years previously. He was absent for eight months, during which time he enrolled and incorporated eighty-seven fine stalwart American officers, who were banded together under the name of the Legion of Honour, with him as their Colonel. They accomplished a marvellous ride. It is nearly three thousand miles from San Francisco to the City of Mexico through El Passo, and yet these men covered this distance in seventy days, without changing horses!

They fought against the French in four or five minor skirmishes on the road, and after joining General Juarez' force, succeeded in putting the French to flight.

It was just at this time that the army heard of the assassination of President Lincoln at Washington, which formed the subject of conversation for many nights round camp fires. The programme then changed. The United States Government suddenly ordered the French to evacuate Mexico.

Petty wars were devastating the land, neither life nor property was safe; tumult reigned. Poor Maximilian, though charming in himself, had shown his weakness all too plainly. Napoleon III. was no longer willing to support the man he had chosen.

Thus it came about that under the pressure of W. H. Seward of the United States, and Benito Juarez of Mexico, the French in 1867 agreed to evacuate, provided the

United States Government would protect them during the evacuation. This being agreed to, the French departed, leaving Maximilian behind them.

An Austrian frigate had been sent to convey the Emperor home, but Maximilian, who at first decided to leave, was met at Orizaba by Bazaine, who persuaded him he could not quit the country without abdicating.

While waiting at Orizaba for their ships, seven Mexican generals, namely, Mirmon, Mejia, Marques, Mendez, Castillio, Cortez and Moran, approached Maximilian. They assured him that if he would remain behind with his eleven thousand Austrian soldiers and three thousand Belgians, they would each of them agree to furnish five thousand followers fully armed and equipped, and establish an empire without the aid of any government. Unfortunately Maximilian listened to them.

Carlotta was opposed to the plan, and did her utmost to dissuade him from it, but in vain. He had given up his birthright before leaving Austria, and if he returned it would be as an Emperor without an Empire. He hesitated, and ultimately consented to remain in his adopted country. He retraced his way westward, thus taking the first step to his tragic end at Querétaro, while Bazaine returned to France, and there met the sad destiny which awaited him at Metz.

Carlotta proceeded alone to Europe, with the view of obtaining assistance for her husband. First she went to Paris, where, to her surprise, she was *not* met at the station by her old friend Napoleon III. Next day she drove out to St. Cloud with one Mexican lady attendant, and sought an audience with the Emperor of France. He received her coldly. She told her story, he listened, regretted he had done all he could for Maximilian, and declared he could do no more. Finally, with tears in her eyes, she *begged* his aid. He refused peremptorily.

Indignantly she turned upon him, exclaiming :

“ Fool, fool that I was to lower my royal house by begging to a plebeian upstart,” or words to that effect.

It was her parting shot. “ She left his presence a crushed woman,” said my informant, and with her companion drove back to Paris. From that time the Empress became a changed person, mentally and bodily a wreck, by turns silent and hysterical. The strain had been too great. She appealed to the Pope ; he could not help her. Finally she had recourse to her father, the King of the Belgians, who ordered out three battalions of troops which were, however, stopped by the United States vessels, and thus the unfortunate Maximilian was cut off from all outside assistance. This worried the poor dethroned lady to such an extent that she completely broke down. Utter mental collapse ensued, from which she has never recovered. Even now she often thinks herself Empress of Mexico, and plays in comedy the *rôle* she sustained in tragedy. Carlotta waited for her husband’s return ; day after day she looked for him, but she never saw him again, and it is said that in her European home she still believes he is alive. A brave life wrecked, a true woman sacrificed, and all for what ?

Although Maximilian was responsible for much bloodshed and misery, yet the ruin of his cause was practically begun before he ever set foot in Mexico, for the exchequer was in a lamentable state, and money—which forms the sinews of war—was sadly deficient. The Emperor bravely adhered to the vows he had taken at Miramar ere accepting the crown of Mexico, but when forsaken by the French his position was hopeless.

After Carlotta left Mexico, Maximilian and his seven generals led their army to the City. Colonel Green, then in the northern part of the present Republic, was, at the battle of San Jacinto, where the Imperial troops were defeated, able to save General Juarez from capture.

Maximilian, learning the sad defeat of the Imperial army, hurried to its assistance with all the forces he could command, and fortified himself at the town of Querétaro, where the Liberal army from the west under General Corona, General Huerta, and the Legion of Honour succeeded in surrounding him.

Reinforced by the army from Northern Mexico, under General Escobedo, the united forces of Juarez met Maximilian and his Imperial forces at Querétaro, where a great battle was fought, and after a siege of eighty-seven days Maximilian and his generals surrendered.

In May, 1867, the Imperialists were defeated at all points. Then it was that Maximilian's spirit began to fail. The succour he had expected from Europe did not come. On the 14th of the month he sent Lopez to General Escobedo to say he wished to leave with fifty picked horsemen for Tampico, and thence embark for Europe. He would let the town surrender at once if his own safety were guaranteed.

Escobedo indignantly refused, and immediately ordered a general assault.

After much bloodshed Maximilian realised the utter hopelessness of his position, and apparently lost his head, for he rushed about alone, begging everyone for horses and help. He was many times fired upon, but never really wounded.

Seizing a handkerchief he tied it to his riding-whip as a flag of truce, and started down the slope of the Cerro de las Campanas, where he met Colonel Green, the officer commanding the Legion of Honour.

"He was disheartened," said the Colonel, "and nervous. His lips were trembling, he looked ill and wan, but withal showed himself a noble and gallant soldier."

"I surrender," he murmured.

"You must surrender to General Escobedo."

"No, no, not to him—to you or to General Corona!"

"Calm yourself," replied the Canadian colonel. "I have a letter from my brother at Washington in my pocket, and he tells me the American Government has interceded for your life."

These words came as a great relief to the unfortunate Emperor, and a flash of joy illuminated his face, but it was only momentary.

By this time General Corona had arrived, and standing aside, Colonel Green beckoned to Maximilian to surrender formally to his superior officer.

"I am Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico," he pulled himself together sufficiently to say, as he presented his sword to Corona.

"You are a Mexican citizen and my prisoner," was the stern reply of his captor.

The Emperor was tried and condemned to be shot, together with his two faithful generals Mejia and Miramon. He was judged a traitor for having acted with Napoleon III. to rob Mexico of her independence.

One month later (June 19, 1867) these three were led forth for execution to a small hill, about a mile and a half distant from the city known as the Cerro de las Campanas. The two generals fell at the first volley, but Maximilian required a second round. Three little crosses were put up to mark the spot which ended French rule in Mexico. Thirty-three years later an insignificant chapel was erected by the Emperor Francis Joseph to commemorate the tragedy, and in April, 1901, an envoy was sent from Austria represented by Prince Khevenhueler and Prince Fuerstenberg, to formally open the chapel.

When General Diaz heard this he determined to do them all honour, and sent his own special train to meet the party at Vera Cruz. It was a pretty act of courtesy. Maximilian's successor honouring the memory of his Imperial adversary!

Diaz can be hard, but Diaz can also be kind. Out of his chivalrous courtesy, received in an equally friendly spirit by the Austrians, developments have ensued, and negotiations been entered into between Mexico and Austria, which only thirty years ago were deadly foes. This is yet another instance of the successful diplomacy of the President of Mexico.

With the death of Maximilian ended one of the most tragic episodes in modern history. At the time, many people blamed him for listening to the overtures of Napoleon III. Be this as it may, the whole record is fraught with pathetic sadness, and one cannot but feel regret that a happy life, which had hitherto been a useful one, should have been sacrificed to the ambition of a man who in the hour of need forsook his friend, and literally betrayed him into the hands of his enemies.

Another of the people I had the pleasure of meeting in Mexico, who has lived in the history of the country, was Madame Degollado, at one time Lady-in-Waiting to the Empress Carlotta.

A Virginia girl, she was brought up to the saddle, and while still in her teens married a Spanish Mexican, who shortly afterwards was appointed Chamberlain to the Emperor Maximilian.

Madame Degollado is now a handsome woman with white hair and fine carriage. It is easy to imagine she was a beautiful girl, and quickly found favour with the Empress Carlotta, to whom she became a constant attendant. As she was the only horsewoman among the Court—for the ladies in Mexico rode even less then than now—while the Empress was devoted to the saddle, the two naturally spent much of their time together. “Carlotta,” who was then about twenty-four, never drove when she could ride, and as there were no railways, all her expeditions were accomplished on horseback.

"Such a handsome woman," said Madame Degollado, "very tall, exceptionally tall and thin, with great grace of movement. Haughty and proud in manner, some people feared her; but she had the kindest of hearts, never neglected a duty, was faithful in her friendships, and always thoughtful for others."

"What did she do all day?" I enquired.

"We rode generally every morning, and then she spent hours and hours over the State papers. I never saw such an industrious woman in my life. She read a great deal, besides conducting all the correspondence with the crowned heads of Europe. For her amusement she sketched and painted. Both she and the Emperor were excellent Spanish scholars, and she spoke wonderful English. In fact, they were both extraordinarily fluent linguists, and I remember once hearing the Emperor say he thought he knew eleven German dialects!"

"'The Empress ought to have been the man and I the woman,' he once laughingly remarked. 'She prefers the drum, I prefer the baton.'

"Had he lived, Mexico would have benefited by his taste and talent. He was a born architect, and loved drawing out plans; there is no doubt about it, he would have done much to beautify the City. The Sokolo was his work, while the Empress founded a hospital and did many things of the same kind."

"Was she happy?" I asked.

"No, I think not; in the first place the grief of her life was not having a child, and then she always felt the insecurity of the Emperor's position."

Speaking of Cuernavaca and the lovely garden where the Imperial pair spent so much of their time, Madame Degollado said:

"The Empress loved that beautiful spot. We used constantly to ride there. By the mountain passes it was

only a distance of some thirty miles. We used to get up very early, and start about four o'clock. She and I rode, accompanied by her gentlemen in waiting, and the Guardo de Palatin (Empress' guard of about one hundred and fifty men). Some of her escort always went on ahead, and pitched the tents at the spot where we were to stop for luncheon and rest during the heat of the day.

"It was quite a caravan, and a very necessary one, for in those days, robbery was an everyday occurrence, and not only did the bandits stop the diligences, but they often stripped passengers of their very clothes."

When I asked Madame Degollado if she had ever experienced such an adventure, she answered :

"Oh, yes, nine times I have been in large or small robberies by the roadside."

A halt was called for the royal cortège for luncheon, and the carriages with the ladies-in-waiting, devoutly telling their beads in gratitude for having proceeded so far on their perilous journey in safety, would arrive, likewise the servants and luggage.

Madame Degollado has a beautiful house, which contains many interesting relics of those unhappy Imperial days. Perhaps the most interesting of all is the least connected with Maximilian, which sounds somewhat like an Irishism. It is Cortés' own desk. Father Fisher, a German, and Confessor to the Emperor, gave it to her; it is truly wonderful. Outside it resembles a miniature bureau, or large desk of inlaid wood, and round the key on a silver plate are the arms of Cortés. Formerly it was studded with silver nails, but these have been picked out. Inside it is Chinese, and not only Chinese, but a Chinese puzzle! It is lacquered scarlet, and painted, and every corner contains a secret drawer. There are literally dozens of them, so many that it seems impossible anyone could ever have made such an ingenious affair.

False bottoms are endless. It is certainly a curiosity. Beside it stands a beautiful bust of Humboldt, by an Italian, which always occupied a place in Maximilian's study, for he was an earnest admirer of the great German traveller. There is also a gem of a crucifix in ivory, given by the Pope to Maximilian to hold in his hand when he went to Rome, in 1864, while being blessed before going out to Mexico. It bears the papal arms in gold, as well as the royal crest, and the Pope presented it to the Emperor as a souvenir of the occasion.

Perhaps the saddest little relic of all is a pillow-case used by the Emperor on the last night he slept in Mexico City. It is made of finest lawn with lace insertion, and the Royal Crown embroidered on it. The centre is mounted on pale blue silk. What pathetic trifles they are, reminding one of a sadly misunderstood and troubled life!



A ride on an engine.



Native huts on Cañon to Tampico.

CHAPTER XVII.

TAMPICO CAÑON ON AN ENGINE.

MEXICO is full of new experiences ; a ride on an engine proved certainly one to a London dame.

I have never been nearer to the Rocky Mountains than when at Niagara in the North, and Durango—which is really on the Southern spur of that gigantic range—in the South ; but people who know both districts declare that the railway track from Cardenas to Tampico in Mexico passes through as fine cañons as any in the Rockies.

This is the *tierra caliente*, or tropical climate of Mexico. Roughly speaking, that climate must be divided into two sections ; the northern district being about as warm as Italy, and the southern half quite tropical. The high altitudes lying between these two districts are colder in proportion to their height.

Zacatecas is 8,967 feet above the sea, therefore chilly ; but our train ran down that enormous descent to Tampico on the coast, where the temperature is tropical. Nine thousand feet is no mean drop for a railway track, and the last four hours of that rapid journey were most exciting.

The beginning of the Cañon de Guerero is sometimes called the Cañon of Tamasopo. Our car was specially run down by engine No. 13, in which number, according to superstition, there ought to be bad luck. However, nothing dreadful happened.

The scenery at first might almost have been in Scotland ;

bare rugged hills and stone walls were to be seen. Then began a series of cuttings, round and round which the line twisted, till the descent was actually discernible from the car. The country as we proceeded became more fertile ; and the land afforded good pasture for cattle.

After a rapid descent we saw below us a large opening encircled by wooded hills, which was the entrance to the cañon. It appeared incredible, for the sides went sheer down as if into a basin, yet into this gorge we were to descend. By a circuitous route we finally dived into the pass, and then for fifteen miles or so we passed through most beautiful scenes, each more lovely and wonderful than the last.

Here and there the grey stone of the rocky boulders looked almost like castellated towers ; the precipices, going sheer down for several hundred feet to the bubbling little river beneath, made one hold one's breath. There in the distance a round black hole in the side of the cliff, denoted a tunnel, and almost before we had grasped the fact, we took a dive into Mother Earth. There are hardly any tunnels in Mexico, so it seemed all the more strange to pass through a regular chain of them.

At one moment the engine and the last car formed a complete horse-shoe, turned and looked at one another in fact, as, with reversed steam and wonderful Westinghouse brakes, we held on our downward course at what to the uninitiated mind seemed a terrific speed ! At another time we saw six of our own tracks zigzag below us, so cleverly did the road wind in and out of that cañon. It is a magnificent journey, not perhaps so gorgeous as that on the Vera Cruz line, but in respect of vegetation and tropical beauty far more lovely.

A curious cut in the rock, which drops sheer into the river below, is known as the Devil's Backbone ; but the Devil's Chasm would surely be a more appropriate title.

All along the sides of the hills, right high up into the thickly-wooded mountains, were patches of brightest green. These were sugar-cane, which grows particularly luxuriantly in this damp tropical region.

“How is it possible to get the cane down to the mills in the valley?” I enquired, there being no road, and the sides of the hill almost perpendicular.

“Men carry it on their backs,” was the astounding reply.

Imagine the whole produce of a field being carried down a precipice, but it is! The sugar-plants were in bloom as we passed, and for the first time I saw their soft feathery purple flowers, which somewhat resemble pampas grass. Bananas were growing in patches everywhere, and the banana is one of those accommodating plants which bear fruit all the year round. Melon trees flourished on all sides; indeed, the tangled jungle seemed to conceal almost every kind of tropical plant and shrub.

The engine-driver told us, only the day before, a fine buck had crossed within thirty feet of his engine, and antelopes, or a flight of turkeys across the line are events of every-day occurrence. We were in the land of monkeys—Micos, meaning monkey, was the name of the next station; they do not often come right on the rails, although they chatter incessantly a few hundred yards distance from the track.

Tall feathery-looking plants grew all about; they looked like giant asparagus fern—giant indeed, when they were often sixty feet in length! These were bamboos, which abound in the jungle of primeval forest—their native heath, so to speak.

The work-people’s huts were made of bamboo, but not bamboo fastened quite close together, oh, dear no! A bamboo rod here, and another at least an inch away, so that from outside we could see right through these tumble-down

dwellings, with their palm-leaved thatched roofs. This meant plenty of ventilation, no doubt, and consequent health, but hardly privacy or comfort. Still, we were in the tropics, and one must not measure the half-clad ladies and gentlemen of those regions, the naked children scampering about or riding on pigs, with the cold-blooded inhabitants of northern climes.

Women were washing in the stream, and one good house-wife had gathered up her cotton skirt to the waist, and was dancing on her clothes in a tub to clean them, just in the same way that we have often seen a Highland lassie do in Scotland. Another was stripped to the waist as she knelt beside a stream to wash, having removed her bodice, that it might not get splashed. It was all very picturesque, charming, and quaint ; the dark olive skin of the people, the bright colouring of their clothes, the nakedness of the children, and the gorgeous tropical vegetation, were all so different to anything ever seen in Britain.

A fine Ceiva tree reared its stately head amongst the tall palms, so straight and majestic that it seemed to say sadly :

“ Here I am, cut me down and make your ‘dug-out’ canoe from me ; I’m ready.”

The tall palms were in groves, the blackness of their charred stems—for part of the jungle had been cleared by fire—being noticeable ; below were millions of those smaller palms for which we pay at the rate of a guinea each, to ornament our English drawing-rooms. In Mexico they grow in wild profusion, only waiting to be dug up. How badly some things appear to be distributed ; those palms, just wasted where they are, would be so much appreciated elsewhere !

Mimosa in flower, red pepper plants, castor-oil vines, were twining round everything and climbing everywhere. Endless creepers and mosses were hanging from the trees, while below lay patches of thick jungle such as one reads of in books on Africa. We had left the cactus and maguey

plants behind in the drier, higher, and therefore colder, altitudes which surround Mexico City ; and now we were enjoying tropical vegetation and tropical temperature, which increased with every thousand feet we descended. The heat was so great no one had an appetite for luncheon ; pickles and stewed peaches were the only articles in demand, in spite of the delicacies provided on the car.

Hawks were flying over-head—to us they seemed out of place in the tropics. Muscovy ducks paddled in the water, and crocodiles were not far off.

Several times a flight of egrets crossed our track, green parrots chattered in the woods, and we occasionally saw a dozen bound together by a string attached to the foot, in front of the peasants' huts. The children were all unclothed—such funny little black things they were, and as they squatted on their hind-quarters they looked just like frogs, big, fat, round frogs ! The only time they wear anything is when they go to church, and then they adorn themselves with a hat !

Here and there patches of heliotrope carpeted the ground, and we felt transported to fairy regions, to some strange land where dwarf races might dwell, or baboons walk forth. The lion and the panther live in that neighbourhood, and are often seen by people working on the line.

There was no dust ; imagine any place in Mexico without dust—the joy of it—but here, there being actually no visible earth, vegetation is so thick dust cannot rise.

The track is wonderful from an engineering point of view ; the descent of the cañon makes many people sick and dizzy. We passed several gangs of track menders, for the enormous engines necessary to pull those heavy freight trains up from the port of Tampico knock the road about, and in the rainy season floods and avalanches damage it still more. The road is splendidly laid ; the steel rails, of English make, embedded in rocky flints, are set

high in order to avoid wash-outs. There was a lovely series of cataracts along our route; for about half a mile the river descended by bounds and leaps.

It was an ideal time of year for travelling, namely, January; summer is the season when rain falls as if the sluices of heaven were opened. These floods are good for the country in many ways, as the climate of Tampico does not vary much, but not for travelling. It is always tropical, and the summer rains keep the temperature almost at the usual winter heat, although when two or three really dry days come in summer, it must be terrible.

One day we mounted a couple of hand cars at a small wayside station; it was a lovely morning, the dew was still on the trees, everything felt bright and invigorating, and clouds were still hiding the higher hills.

Away we sped, the pace was rapid, and as there was nothing to hold by, and only a small foot-board, we felt we must go over as we swung round corners and looked down precipices into rocky river beds below. Indeed, we passed over one bridge where, peering down between the sleepers, we saw an enormous chasm lying five hundred feet beneath! What a view we had as we turned a bend of the snake-like track! A valley at least a hundred miles in diameter lay before us; the sun was up in all his glory, the tropical heat was on us, and the colours lovely!

At the Cathedral cave—La Ventana—we stopped, and scrambled up some primitive rocky staircases into the cavern itself. As we entered a flock of green parrots flew out with a shriek; we had disturbed them in their home.

The natives make great pets of their parrots, especially the smaller green ones. They clip one wing, and then let the bird perch anywhere upon them; we often saw men and women with a parrot sitting on their head or shoulder. They walked about and did their work, but the parrot still clung to them, a faithful friend and companion. Even in



A couple of hand-cars.



A native vine bridge.

the towns we have seen parrots sitting on men's hats in tram-cars. A strange weird chant issued from a corner of the cavern the parrots had just left.

"What on earth is that?" I enquired, still bewildered with their shrieks.

"Felipe learning his catechism for the priest," was the reply, and so it was, for we afterwards saw one of our hand car men of some thirty summers, sitting, his head bent over his tiny volume, struggling to learn by heart the catechism he could only read with difficulty.

The caves form a series of fine chambers, and several curious stalactites and stalagmites are there, one of which exactly resembles a crouching monkey, another an old man. A green-coloured stalagmite in the middle must have measured some fifteen or sixteen feet high, and as much in circumference. But the most interesting part to me was the trees. The cavern has light holes here and there at the top, and through these apertures vines and tendrils have come down. Some are there now, just light and feathery tracery. Others, as they strengthened and reached the earth, thirty or forty feet below, have taken root. Not only that, but fine trees have grown from these saplings, the roots being well spread over the cavern below, while the trunks look black like the masts of a ship in the dim light, and through the openings foliage struggles from the dark cave into the light beyond in its endeavour to kiss the passing clouds.

The effect is extraordinary. It is hard to understand how these big trees live in such dark mystery while the tender shoots above enjoy the glorious sunshine of the day.

We tumbled down the steps again, and so back to our hand-car and off we sped to the second cavern; this was down the side of the mountain and totally different from the other. Choy cave has a river of deep dark-blue water at its base. Friends have bathed therein—but they owned it was wondrous cold—they swam into that black opening yonder,

until all grew so dark and mysterious they were fain to turn back again to the light. Some day, perchance, a boat may penetrate that gloomy depth; in the meantime the cave is far from the haunts of men. Its one entrance towards the light reminded me of the glimpse of the open sea from Fingall's Cave, Scotland.

Hard by are some wonderful sulphur springs, where the natives who suffer from rheumatism and various skin diseases repair, but they also are comparatively little known. Perhaps, a few years hence, they may become a fashionable health resort with a fine hotel—who knows? At any rate, no more lovely spot could be found than this part of the railway line between the great Cañon de Guerero, and Tampico.

Before returning to our trolley-car we walked through the tunnel, as it was considered safer to do so, and only those who have travelled in a hand-car down such a zigzag road know how near one is to danger all the time. The entrance to that tunnel was wonderful—being partly shaded with maiden-hair fern almost as thick as bracken is in Scotland, though, of course, it does not grow so high, and most of our hot-house plants and flowers were blooming there just as it seemed for their own pleasure, since passers-by were few and far between.

Butterflies of every variety hovered in the air, and wild bees made their honey in the caves or the roots of trees.

At Cafetal, the most dangerous part of that magnificent descent was over, and the extra man who had manipulated the back brakes of the train took his departure.

We stopped at the station—a couple of houses would be a more appropriate term!—and walked down some three hundred steps to see the waterfall below. Here were more melons, with hard black pips, on trees—great tall high trees—coffee plants, with their ripe red berries, shaded by plantains, tangled creepers falling from the boughs of the

trees in veritable fringes and planting themselves again in Mother Earth ; wonderful grey moss that seemed to grow by the yard and by the ton ; large fronds of maidenhair fern were nestling along the rocks, splendid red-leaved plants here, large green velvety-leaved ones there ; red trumpet flowers, while various species of orchids clung to the trunks of the trees. To see all the things we know in conservatories at home, growing wild and uncared-for, causes one to realise how tropical the climate in the lowlands of Mexico must be.

When we stood on Puente de Dios (God's Bridge) a rocky path between the two falls, with the wonderful blue water flowing beneath, and the stalactites hanging around us, we felt as if we were in a vapour bath, and while ascending those three hundred steps, understood we were really in the tropics !

As we approached Tampico we were going so directly east that the sun set straight behind us, actually at the vanishing point of miles of long straight track.

At the port they kindly ran our car down to the bar, where we enjoyed a cool sea breeze during the night, and also were free from the plague of the tropics, mosquitoes.

What will be the future of Tampico ? It stands on a river up which large ocean steamers can pass ; it has just completed the erection of one of the most beautiful Custom Houses imaginable, a building of which the Liverpool Docks might well be proud. It is constructing a wharf of solid stone, about half a mile long ; indeed it is preparing the way for becoming one of the world's greatest sea ports. Ships drawing twenty-three feet of water can easily anchor in its harbour.

And there, among the shipping, we actually saw those enormous fish called tarpon gaily disporting themselves, a fish to catch which men travel half over the world. Our thoughts turned immediately to our delightful host during

many pleasant days in Philadelphia, Horace Howard Furness, one of the greatest scholars and most courtly gentlemen in the United States, who turns from his Shakespearean studies to catch tarpon in Florida. What a pity he was not with us at Tampico to land some of those splendid gentlemen frolicking like whales in the water.

Tampico is likely to become an important place. The river Panuco is half a mile wide, and the new jetties have made entry possible at all times. There is a low sandy coast line, where there would be excellent bathing but for the numerous sharks, and where golf links could easily be made. Pelicans walk across the sands, and devil-fish fly overhead.

We had a delightful day out at sea, in a yacht, to look at the new jetties and make further acquaintance with the tarpon, and then ran some miles up the river in a smaller steam launch, kindly entertained by Mr. Bradley, the superintendent of the Mexican Central Railway.

I have been up into the skies in a balloon, and down into the earth in a coal-pit and a silver mine, but I had never been whirled through space on a locomotive.

I had often wanted to ride on an engine, just to try the effect of the thing, and feeling that no view could possibly look more beautiful than the Cañon de Guerero from that coign of vantage, I plucked up courage and asked those in authority if I might enjoy this novel experience on the return journey.

“It is strictly prohibited,” was the reply, “but if you really mean that you would like to try a ride on the engine—and mind, it is not comfortable, and on such precipices as there are about here, often most alarming—well, we will arrange it.”

“Splendid, I’m your man!” was my somewhat ungrammatical and incorrect response.

At the foot of the famous cañon Mr. Coffman—the

official in charge of that part of the line—and I left our comfortable private car, and walked the length of the train where a second engine had been added for the twenty-eight mile tug. As we were to pass through sundry tunnels, and as I wanted to see the working of an engine, we went in the "cab," namely, the little protected part where the engine-driver—or engineer, as he is always called in Mexico—works his innumerable levers, handles, bolts, screws, and heaven knows what besides. It was a stiff climb up, just one iron bar between the ground and the floor of the engine; but who minds wide steps on such an occasion?

At the rear of the train was our private car, then came first and third class coaches, and finally a couple of engines with their coal trucks; the one nearest the train was the bigger; ours, which did all the steering, the smaller.

Behind the body of our engine was the iron and glass that we all know so well by sight. The engineer—a Canadian—sat on the right side of it, perched up on a high seat. He could see straight ahead out of the little window before him, which was open, and the two side windows. At his elbows, in front of him, round his legs, and between them too, everywhere, in fact, were valves and brakes with brass knobs, all brightly polished.

On the other side of the cab was a similar bench, minus all these implements of war, and on that I seated myself, my feet resting against the front window, my skirts carefully gathered up on to my lap, to prevent their being injured by the furnace fire. My official friend curled himself up on to the remaining portion of the seat behind.

In the middle of the cab there was just room for the stoker; his coal truck was at his back, his furnace fire before him, and after filling his large shovel full of coal he swung round, opened the door of that blazing furnace—the heat of which scorched my face until it was the colour of a tomato—shovelled it in, and banged the massive door

to again. For the first hour he put on fresh coal every thirty or forty seconds, in fact, as often as he could conveniently refill his shovel and open the furnace door, after that he only did so every one or two minutes! Tremendous was the work the two engines had to do. Now and again the man poked our fire with an iron rod some ten feet long, which had a horse-shoe at the end to act as a sort of rake. Poking the fire took longer than merely adding coal, and during the process I was nearly roasted.

The engine bell rang; our locomotive whistled and snorted, puffed hard, tugged at the train, made literally deafening noises, and ponderously started on its journey. The route at that point was along a grade of three per cent. nearly all the way, that is to say a rise of about 160 feet in every mile!

Two things amazed me—the awful heat in which those men have to work, especially where such power is required, and the perfectly deafening noise of an engine puffing and snorting up a mountain side. It was almost impossible to hear another person speak. I shrieked questions at the official behind me and he bellowed back, but even then it was well nigh impossible to hear. I have always had considerable respect for men working an engine, knowing what presence of mind and personal courage are constantly required in their calling, but after spending a few hours in the cab of an engine, I began to feel that every engine-driver is a hero! Verily an uncrowned hero.

Our speed was only from eight to ten miles an hour, but we had to take in water every seven miles, so steep was the ascent. The pace when descending the cañon is about twenty miles an hour, and one shovel of coal every two or three miles—just sufficient to keep the engine warm—is all that is necessary. Everything then depends upon the Westinghouse air-brake, one of the greatest and safest of modern inventions; everything now depended on steam!

It was certainly a wonderful experience, the turns in the road are so sharp that often fifty yards ahead is all that one can see, and sometimes twenty yards is the limit, flanked by some huge rock. Often we could see the back end of the train turned right round towards the engine, we were in fact running parallel to each other!

The perspiration simply poured from the poor stoker, as he worked to keep his engine fed for such a tug, and the heat was so great in our cab that I felt as though I were being boiled. Cinders and sparks flew back from the funnel through my window, and burnt little round holes all over my dress, and little red patches on my hands and face! All engines, probably, are not so hot as this was, but then we were ascending one of the record cañons of the world, and in the tropics to boot.

Suddenly I got an awful fright; I looked across to the engineer's seat, and lo! it was empty!

This made me quake, and I yelled into the ear of poor Mr. Coffman:

“Where is the engine-driver?”

He nodded reassuringly, at the same time replying:

“He has gone to tighten a bolt.”

At that instant the Canadian stepped back into the cab through his small open window, hammer in hand, and settled himself down once more to his brakes and valves. To me it had been a terrible moment, for I had not seen the man go, or heard him move in that tremendous noisy vibration and snort of steam, and to feel that the engine might walk over a precipice hundreds of feet in depth at any turn in the road seemed horrible, too horrible even to contemplate.

But it was all right; a little later, he did the same again, but this time I saw him adjust his handles first, before he disappeared, and so the danger did not seem so appalling.

All along the track were posts marked “SLOW,”

“STOP,” “WHISTLE,” in English, yes, actually in English! It is quite remarkable to find that practically all the train-people in Mexico belong to English-speaking races. For instance, the Mexican Central Railway runs over some two thousand miles of track, and every engineer and brakeman on the trains is either American or English. Even the car-porters and cooks speak English, and this remark practically applies to all the lines. At the ticket offices, anywhere, in the stations, and on the trains, Anglo-Saxon is the language of travelling Mexico.

Formerly the greater part of the lines and rolling stock was English, but during the last year or two American goods have been taking their place. Why?

“Because they are cheaper and better,” is the reply.

If this be so, surely it is time we English woke up and regained the trade once ours, which we are rapidly losing.

While we are painting our engines and putting grand golden lines on them, no practical use whatever, the American is expending the same amount of money in adding to the comfort of his railway carriages, and therefore the ease of the public; while we are painting the words “Railway Company” upon everything, the American is omitting even the R.C., and thereby saving again.

“Why is American engineering so far ahead of English?” I asked a well-known engineer in the States.

“Because we employ machinery to make machinery,” was the reply. “Every component part is made according to a pattern, and turned out in hundreds.”

What is the result? American engines, bridges, printing machines and automobiles, made at half the price of ours, are flooding our markets. This great steel trust is going to close many of our doors, and we intend to allow its produce to land upon our shores free!

Other countries are growing rich by means of protection, and England without it is now struggling to keep her head

above water. All countries should be free, or all protected, otherwise our handicap will surely prove more than we can stand.

"Why is America so rich?" I asked one of the greatest statesmen in the States.

"Because of the duties you pay us, and the goods we send you free!"

And he knows.

The track up the cañon is indeed a model one. It is kept so splendidly, the edges of the flints on which the wooden sleepers lie are as even and well trimmed as the edges of a drive in an English park. The ascent is so steep, and the difficulties so ever-present, what with rain, damp, mist, and, at certain seasons of the year, floods, that every effort has to be made to keep the track in as perfect condition as possible.

We went through several tunnels, and when we saw the black hole in the solid rock just in front of us, we shut the front window. In a moment all was darkness, save for the fiery sparks and cinders which fell like a shower from the funnel. The heat reminded one of Dante's description of the infernal regions, and it was rendered even worse by the sulphurous smoke that found its way into our cab from the back, which was all open.

We gasped for breath, and dived for our handkerchiefs, till, feeling more like ripe tomatoes than ever, we suddenly realised that we were out of the tube; the white speck of light had become a real opening, and we could breathe again. We looked back and saw volumes of smoke emerging from the tunnel, our smoke following us, drawn by the suction of the train.

It was a lovely ride, and a most unique experience, but I dismounted from my perch at Cardenas looking rather like an engine-driver or a stoker myself!

At the moment (1901) there seems to be a sudden rush on the part of Mexican railways to reach the Pacific coast. The International, which goes as far as Santiago, where I went on the first trial trip, hopes to reach Mazatlan on the coast next year, thus joining the Mexican Pacific with the States.

The Mexican Central, which has its fine port at Tampico, on the Gulf of Mexico, is already as far across as Zapolan, and will reach the Pacific at Manzanillo in 1902.

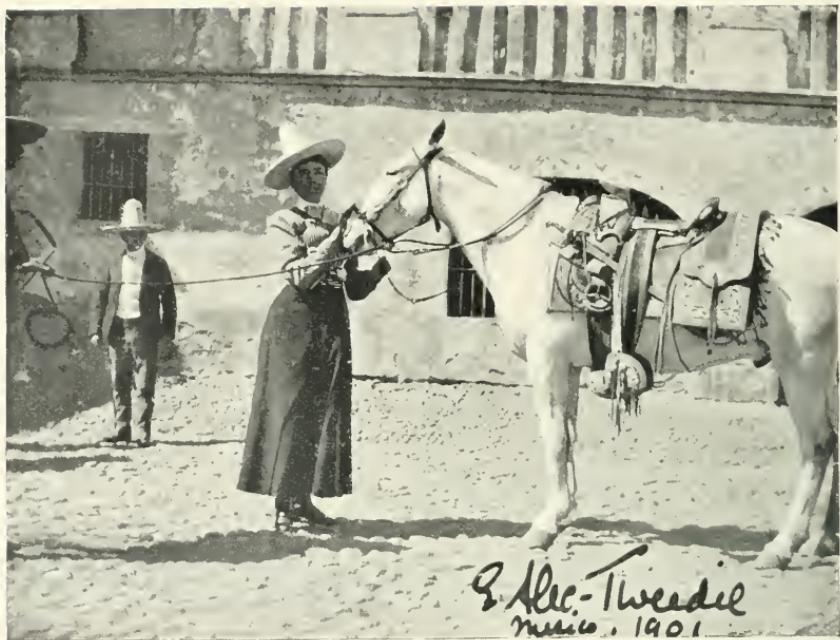
The Cuernavaca and Pacific, now as far south as the Balzas river, is planning to reach the port of Acapulco.

The Mexican Southern, which at present stops at Oaxaca, expects to be at Mitla by 1902, and there is a talk of connecting it later with the Tehuantepec line on the Isthmus.

The Isthmus route from Coatzacoalcos to Salina Cruz is completed.

Thus, in a few months, there will be five lines touching ports on the Pacific coast, such is the enterprise of the railways, helped by Government.

Who says Mexico has not a great future?



The writer in her divided riding-skirt for mounting astride.



Mounted astride, outside the Nochicaleo ruins, Southern Mexico (Aztec man in white)

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW THE GOVERNOR OF A MEXICAN STATE ENTERTAINED AN
ENGLISHWOMAN.

AN early morning train was to convey me from Mexico City to Cuernavaca, such a lovely journey, by El Gran Pacifico !

Armed with enormous bouquets of violets, gardenias, and a box of sweets—received as parting gifts—and carrying my huge sombrero, I entered the railway carriage, after saying “Good-bye” to several kind friends. My escort happily chanced to be an old schoolfellow of kindergarten days in Harley Street, London, who had been in business in Mexico for some years. Adolfo Grimwood knew the line well, and could point out all objects of interest, which were not few.

While we were enjoying breakfast, the mist rose from the valley, and the train ascended about two thousand feet to an elevation of ten thousand above sea level. How grand that panorama was ! There below—as on a map—lay the town of Mexico, the lakes so famous in history, the scattered villages, the deep barrancas and, towering above the mountain ranges, those two glorious snow-capped volcanic peaks, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl.

It is a splendid journey, each view more beautiful than the last, until—well, the first impression of the town of Cuernavaca would have been rather disappointing had not the Governor of Morelos, with a number of friends and officials, been standing on the platform to receive us !

While travelling down I read in that wonderful little paper, the "Mexican Herald," this announcement, which I soon found, judging from the interest they appeared to take in me, everyone in the train had read also.

ALONG THE GRAN PACIFICO.

ENGLISH AUTHORESS CONTINUES HER TRAVELS OF OBSERVATION.

Mrs. Alec Tweedie, the charming English authoress, will leave this morning for a trip to Cuernavaca and other points along the line of the Cuernavaca and Pacific, and perhaps the caves of Cacahuamilpa. President Diaz has written a personal letter to Governor Alarcón, of Morelos, introducing Mrs. Tweedie. The Governor will meet her personally to-day, and a concert will be given in her honour this evening in the plaza at Cuernavaca. Mrs. Alec Tweedie will also visit the hacienda of Governor Alarcón, and also the Cortés and Amors hacienda. After her return to this City she will visit Puebla and other points along the line of the Mexican Railway, and afterwards Oaxaca and Mitla.

Colonel Alarcón was unfortunately no linguist ; but with my limited Spanish, and the assistance of kind people, we became great friends during the eight days he so courteously and delightfully pioneered me through his province. I shall therefore describe this week in detail, as it was a typical reception by a Governor of a State, one almost royal in its magnificence.

At the station, with ceremonious courtesy, he offered me his arm. Outside a beautiful landau was waiting—closed as usual, for Mexicans love to drive shut up, in spite of the glorious weather. Raising his hat, he closed the door. I was surprised ; but next moment he appeared at the other door, and entering the landau sat down beside me. The Mexicans are most particular about placing honoured guests behind the coachman. The carriage and horses were all that could be desired, but—again Mexican fashion—the coachman wore no livery, except a big sombrero ! It is only right that a straw hat should be used in such a sunny land, and the Mexican sombreros are much more useful than the sailor hats London coachmen don during summer weather. The Mexican driver, especially if he be a darkie, often uses a green-lined white

umbrella, for he is afraid of the sun like the good folk inside the carriage he is driving.

By-the-bye, horses in Mexico do not wear hats!

As we drove through the streets both policemen and soldiers saluted, and the people stood back and bowed. The Governor's wife was unfortunately absent, being ill at their hacienda (country house), which I visited later, and the Governor had therefore engaged rooms for me in the hotel, thinking I should be more comfortable there than in his residence without its châtelaine. Arrived at the hotel he again offered me his arm, and we walked across the great verandah, where people were sitting at little tables, and thence solemnly escorted me upstairs. Waiters led the way, and unlocking a charming room, opening off a big salon, the Governor bid me welcome as his guest, and hoped I should be comfortable.

A splendid luncheon was prepared, to which I was fetched by my host—who, be it known, is one of General Diaz' greatest and most esteemed friends—we passed through the patio, full of flowers and plants, and when we reached the dining-room, he requested me to sit at the head of the table, he himself taking a seat on my right. Six gentlemen were of the party, namely, Señor Gobernador Manuel Alarcón, his aides-de-camp—Captain Juan Enriquez, Señors Ramon Oliveros, Ignacio Sarmina—Mr. William Gaynor and Mr. Adolfo Grimwood.

Everything was perfect at that luncheon, where I enjoyed “Aguacate” for the first time. These are the butter plants of Mexico, which in appearance are like a small green melon; when opened they are seen to contain a stone resembling a large chestnut. Between the stone and the skin is a delicious soft green buttery fruit, which the Mexicans scrape out and mix with their soup. We were a pleasant little party, and when the time came for smoking, I noticed a curious cigar-cutter that Colonel Alarcón used.

"I am very proud of that," he said, "it belonged to our great patriotic song writer, Guillermo Prieto, the Poet Laureate of Mexico, who died in 1897. He gave it to me shortly before his death; at least, he said he would give it me. He was taken ill, however, before he could do so, but almost on his death-bed, almost in his last hour indeed, he remembered the promise, and told his wife to send me that cigar-cutter. It was very touching of him, and I prize it as much as anything I possess!"

Prieto's poems were full of brilliant romance and wild imagination, and his memory is adored.

After luncheon the Governor's carriage arrived, and we drove out to see the town, a wonderfully ancient and yet go-ahead place, with its fine brick factory—the red of the bricks reminded me of our pretty English homes—its brewery, public baths, ice, rice, and electric light factories, its fine cathedral, and, more interesting than all—to my mind—that wonderful old garden and house where Maximilian lived. It was January, yet the magnolias were in full flower in the *Jardin de la Borda*, mangoes in blossom, roses and geraniums in full flower, semi-tropical fruits hung from the trees, together with oranges and bananas; everything combined to make those fountains, steps, and water-ways look beautiful. It was an ideal garden, a garden for lovers to wander through at will, and whisper those sweet nothings which turn earth to paradise; the spot for poet or painter; a place to sit and reflect how beautiful is nature, how lovely life, to realise into what a world of joy we are born. It is places like this that make people feel better men and women, views like this—across valleys and over mountain peaks with the sunlight glinting through the trees—where the commonplace dares not trample unscrupulously on the ideal, that make one realise the blessedness of existence.

In that garden the Emperor Maximilian and poor Car-

lotta spent much of their time ; there she sat, sketched or read, and endeavoured to forget the peril of her husband's position.

Cuernavaca stands on a hill with deep barrancas or chasms all round and high mountains beyond, and the healthiness of the town and its beautiful climate do much to make it popular. It proved more picturesque on a nearer acquaintance than it had appeared from the train.

That night a military band played beneath my window !

Next morning another surprise had been arranged. At 7-30 the Governor and his friends arrived to take me to see the waterfall, "Cascada de San Antonio," a charming drive beyond the town. We were all talking merrily when suddenly the carriage pulled up ; to my amazement, under a triumphal arch !

"Welcome to San Antonio" was written above, in English ; the sides and top were beautifully decorated with palms, bourganvillas, large trumpet lilies, arums, and begonias. It really was a lovely bower, for it was composed of the flowers we only see in hot-houses and guard with such care, in England, but which grow wild in those parts. The arch looked quite fairy-like in its floral splendour, owing to the artistic manner in which the trestles that formed its framework were interlaced.

About a hundred Indians from the village stood, hat in hand, to receive us, and offering me his arm, Governor Alarcón solemnly walked me off, followed by the rest of the company. It made me feel rather ancient to be thus ceremoniously given an arm at every turn ; but it is of course the height of Mexican politeness.

After going a short distance we reached a set of stairs partly cut in the rock, and partly secured with wood-work, on what had formerly been a most dangerous path. This had been specially prepared in my honour, and was in future to be called "Escaleras Tweedie" (Tweedie staircase).

We went down to the beautiful cascade below, passing under smaller arches raised by the Indians, with wreaths and festoons of flowers, and actually found seats had been erected from which to enjoy a view of the Falls! It was all very pretty, and to me particularly touching; in the first place it showed the Governor's desire to please President Diaz, who had written both to him and the Secretary of State personal letters on my behalf, and secondly it showed the love of the villagers for their Governor, as they had done much more than he had suggested. He had ordered the stair-way to be cut, but the floral arches were their own idea.

When we returned from this lovely spot, where wild maidenhair fern and arum lilies were growing by the side of the waterfall, we drove through the village of San Antonio, and five times were the carriages stopped, while the Indians presented me with pieces of their pottery, as "a remembrance of your visit, Señora." That pottery is made of rich red-brown clay—the same as is used at the brick factory—and a sort of mosaic work is traced upon it, with small triangles and diamonds of white china; the eagle of Mexico is naturally the chief decoration, surrounded by borders of geometrical pattern. The result is charming, and I eventually had to get a wooden case, and have it properly packed in order to convey my offerings from the Indians in Morelos back to England. The people were so clean and picturesque, and so delightfully respectful in their manners to their Governor, it seemed impossible to believe that twenty years ago rebellion was rife, and no one's life safe.

Old women came out and offered roses, and at one place a man brought the most magnificent bouquet of white magnolias I had ever seen. Twenty or thirty of these glorious blooms were tied together, the scent from which in the carriage was almost overpowering.

At the village of San Antonio is a curiously-carved pre-

historic rock, and on a hill close at hand a lizard nine feet long is sculptured upon a large boulder. Further, again, is the famous stone eagle—the bird's wings outspread measure about three feet. Such strange bits of carving may be seen anywhere and everywhere in Mexico.

It was a day of surprises. At Cuernavaca is the famous palace of Hernando Cortés. It was built about the year 1525, in grand solid old Spanish style with arches and deep verandahs, but this is no guide-book, it is only a description of Mexico as I saw it, and further information of a guide-book nature must therefore be sought elsewhere.*

The Aztec monarch, Montezuma, was furnished with reinforcements from Cuernavaca. Then came Cortés, and the subsequent Conquest of Mexico. Now the ecclesiastical-looking old building is the Municipal Palace.

A grand luncheon had been arranged for the occasion of my visit. What could be more interesting than a banquet within those historical walls which had witnessed so many bloody deeds, for men were slain and steel had often clashed at Cuernavaca ! but amid the sunshine and the flowers, with a gay company assembled around, these walls spoke only of happiness and joy. The palace has been fitted to suit modern requirements, and the rooms are now used for meetings and assemblies of all kinds.

When we arrived a guard of soldiers was keeping the door, and a military band stationed in the square below.

The Governor of the State had asked about twenty people to luncheon which we enjoyed on a verandah commanding a most glorious view ! The guests included Señor Eugenio y Cañas, the Treasurer of the State ; Luis Flores, the Secretary of State, Ignacio Robles y Sosa (manager of the Cortés hacienda which we visited in great ceremony the following day), Ignacio Sarmina, Adolfo Grimwood (my old school-

* Campbell's excellent guide, or Janviers' more historical one, give all details needed by the tourist.

fellow), William Gaynor, Harry Hampson, of the Cuernavaca Railway, Ramon de Oliveros, and their women folk.

Below is the card of invitation to the banquet.



de la comida ofrecida en el corredor del Palacio
de Hernán Cortés á la

Sra. Alec Tweedie,

por el

SEÑOR CORONEL MANUEL ALARCON.



JEREZ.	APERITIVOS. Ostiones al natural.
CHABLIS.	
Cos D'ESTOURNEL.	Tortila con chicharos.
	Huachinango á la princesa.
BORGONA.	Pavo trufado.
	Ensalada de langosta.
CHAMPAGNE.	Ponche á la romana.
	Pastel de pollo.
	Roast beef.
	Espárragos.
TE. CAFE. COGNAG. LICORES.	Queso camembert.

CHAMPAGNE. PASTELES, DULCES, JALETINAS, FRUTAS.

TE. CAFE. COGNAG. LICORES.

Cuernavaca, Enero 20 de 1901.

[TRANSLATION.—Menu. A luncheon offered in the hall of the Palace of Hernán Cortés to Mrs. A. T., by Governor Colonel Manuel Alarcon.]

A dozen or more performers, all with mandolines or guitars, played delightful Mexican music during dinner, and afterwards we all felt gay and festive enough to dance, and the *danza*, typical of the country, is really charming.

But to return to our luncheon.

Every guest was given a bouquet of flowers to wear, with a pin attached for the gentlemen, and a safety-pin for the ladies. My bunch was chiefly composed of orange blossom, over which we had many jokes. The Governor of the State, on learning I was a widow, thought it would be amusing to be what he called "a good prophet," or, as I said, "a bad one," and had specially ordered my bunch to be composed of orange blossom !

It is funny in Mexico to see how both men and women produce a pin and fasten their table-napkins high up under their chins ! The banquets are tremendously long ; I actually once sat down at one o'clock and rose at 4-30 ; at least twenty-five dishes passed in succession ! Ices are invariably served in the middle of the repast ; after the fruit course—always delicious tropical fruit—the crumbs are removed, and the puddings and preserves begin. Another Mexican custom is for everyone to drink a liqueur of brandy in the drawing-room before dinner ; it is handed round just before the meal. People swallow it raw, and quaff off iced water !

At the Governor's luncheon we had red, green and white jellies cleverly arranged to represent the Mexican flag ! Ribbons of the national colours were cunningly entwined among the flowers.

Colonel Alarcón made me a delightful little speech, and Spanish Mexicans certainly know how to pay a compliment prettily — saying that whatever he had arranged to do at the request of his esteemed friend and master, President Diaz, he now did with a thousand times more pleasure because he knew me personally ! Adolfo Grimwood replied

charmingly on my behalf, for my poor Spanish could only say "Very, very many thanks."

The wines were numerous; in Mexico people drink a good deal at table, in which they differ materially from the folk of the United States; the men but not the Mexican ladies smoke during dessert. At the very end of dinner, practically after everything has been cleared away, champagne is handed round, and the healths which have been drunk all through the meal are continued with renewed gusto. "Salud" is murmured on every side. The gentlemen then offer their arms to the ladies and escort them to the drawing-room, standing back on one side to finish their cigars or cigarettes.

Of course there is "the sofa of honour"—most countries seem to have that terrible seat of torture, with chairs ranging down from it on both sides—and there it was my fate to sit. Every stranger who entered was introduced by his full name and title; he bowed and I bowed, then we shook hands, for in Mexico the men do not kiss a woman's hand; that is a pretty custom they ignore. Everyone shakes hands on every possible occasion; in fact a clerk leaving an office will bow to his superior, and while asking permission to go to his dinner, shake hands with his "boss."

Mexicans are most hospitable and kindly, provided one has good introductions, but without them no stranger is ever invited to enter their doors. They were more than good to me.

The greatest excitement of my stay in Cuernavaca was arranged for that Sunday evening. The Governor had organised an official concert in the theatre. He came to fetch me at 9 o'clock, and when we drove up to the "Teatro Porfirio Diaz," a crowd was waiting to receive us.

Appended is the invitation, beautifully printed on a coloured card, on the reverse side of which was the programme:—

El Gobernador del Estado

invita a Ust. para el concierto con que obsequiará a la

Distinguida Escritora

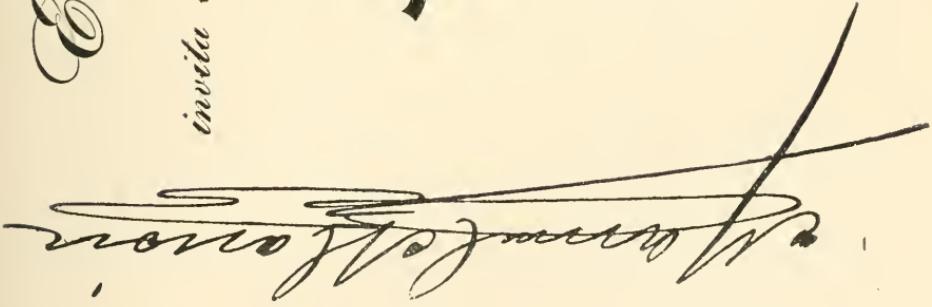
Mrs. Alec Tweedie,

en el teatro "Porfirio Díaz,"

la noche del 20 de las corrientes, a las 9.

Cuernavaca, Cenro de 1901.

[TRANSLATION.—The Governor of the State invites you to a concert given in honor of the Distinguished Writer, Mrs. A. T., at the "Porfirio Diaz" Theatre, on the evening of 20th inst., at 9 o'clock. Cuernavaca, January, 1901.]



The entire place was decorated, inside and out. Festoons of moss and flowers ; yards and yards, and hundreds of yards of the lovely grey moss that grows in those tropical regions hung from box to box. Between each were bouquets of flowers, even the fronts of the boxes which rise in tiers were festooned. It was a large hall, as the theatres in Mexico usually are, and that night looked a bower of beauty.

On the stage about thirty young ladies, dressed in many shades of colour, were seated with their mandolines and guitars ; below was the ordinary orchestra. The house was full ; the stalls were crowded ; there were two rows of boxes, filled with smiling humanity—we occupied a box in the centre, and above, the galleries were packed with enthusiastic Indians. It really was a delightful experience, or would have been, if quite so many opera-glasses had not been turned our way !

There were many pretty costumes at the concert. Some of the men actually wore evening dress, but all the ladies had donned high light silks. Low dresses, except for balls, are unknown outside the City of Mexico. But one and all of these fair dames had a flower tucked somewhere in their hair, either behind the ear, or more usually on one side towards the front, where it nestled among raven tresses. Mantillas were not to be seen, and the high comb was missing. It was a smart audience, despite high dresses and frock-coats, and certainly enthusiastic, not only over the music, but on the entrance of Colonel Alarcón.

The next day's experiences were different, yet equally interesting. A dozen of us rode to the hacienda where Cortés made sugar nearly four hundred years ago, and where, at the time of my visit, it was made in the self-same way !

The Governor in his *charro* suit was mounted on a white horse with a marvellous saddle and bridle. I had the pleasure of riding that same horse a little later. The *charro*

is the typical Mexican riding-dress. It is often made of light brown leather—kid or lamb skin—on which are beautiful devices in silver, or white stitching. The coat is short, almost a bolero, and the trousers so tight that one wonders how the wearer ever gets into them. The legs, gorgeously decorated at the side, are often ornamented with dozens of silver buttons, especially the riding-dress of rich rancheros or *haciendados*. The *charro* is as heavily adorned as the saddle, and the value of the two together sometimes reaches as much as a couple of hundred pounds sterling.

We had seven *Rurales*, as a body-guard.

It was a strange cavalcade ; all were men, with the exception of myself, and as I rode astride, I might perhaps have passed for a little bit of a man too ! The other ladies drove ; we were thirty-six by the time all had arrived for dinner. The sun was hot, but no ladies wore hats ; they either drove in a closed carriage or used a parasol.

The ride was most interesting, passing as it did the little house to which Maximilian often rode from Cuernavaca for an afternoon's rest, but the Cortés hacienda itself was the chief charm. It stood as it had done in the days of the great conqueror himself, when he lived there with a fair lady whom—history records—he ultimately murdered.

As we entered the great archway, and the horses' hoofs rattled over the stones, we seemed carried back to the old feudal days of portcullis and knights in armour, outside the castle keep.

It is the dearest old place ; so strong and massive, so imposing in its solid strength. Just inside an archway is a sort of office. It has neither windows nor doors ; but behind a big table and desk a clerk keeps accounts of all cart-loads as they pass before him to the factory. A fine carved staircase leads to the dwelling-rooms above, and looking on to this stairway from an inner room is a

window. It has no glass, not even cow-horn, but the wooden posts are carved. Above is the signature of Cortés :

“Jesus. Maria. José. Hernando Cortés.”

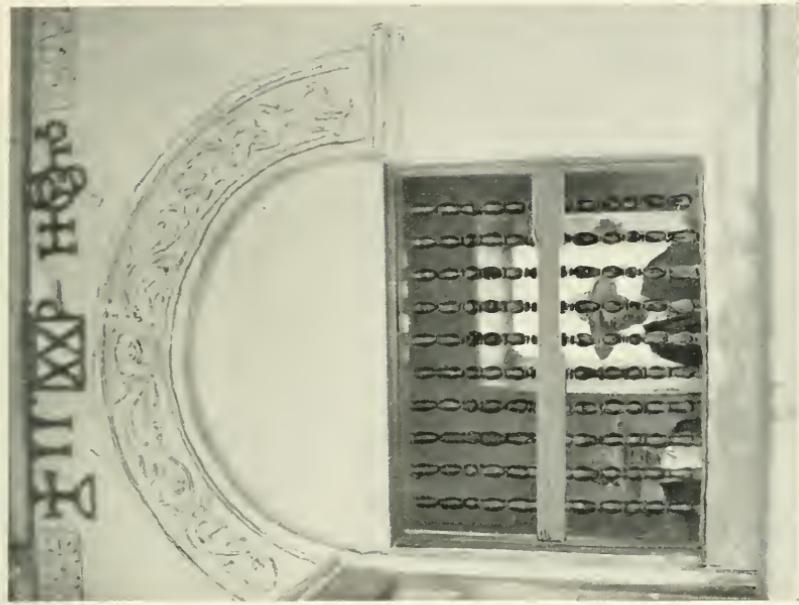
as he himself inscribed it there so long ago!

The buildings run all round four sides of an enormous courtyard. On the left is the house, with its large, airy chambers, quaint kitchens with their vaulted roofs and red-brick floors—the sort of kitchen where charcoal is burnt in large stone stoves, such as are to be seen in Morocco. In the rooms are some of Cortés' massive wooden chests, one of which is big enough to have comfortably held the lady of whom we read in the “Mistletoe Bough.” Below the apartments are great dark cellars, which form a sort of cloister, where the sugar is extracted from the molasses.

Sugar-cane grows for miles around the hacienda ; it is cut, carted to the factory, and passed through machinery to extract the juice, whence it emerges a green, slimy substance. Cooked to evaporate the water and clear the residue, it goes through many processes of boiling and skimming, and is subsequently poured into thousands of brown earthenware jars, such as may be seen in the picture. These are the same jars as were used by Cortés, and the shape of the top one is the origin of the sugar loaf, or loaf sugar. The clear sugar remains in the top pot. These earthenware jars are going out of vogue. Modern machinery is coming into use all through Mexico, and at most of the haciendas the old system is being abandoned, while the jars are broken into bits and utilised for making garden walls or road-ways !

The molasses extracted forms a thick brown syrup, which is rather acid ; it falls through into the jar below, and is ultimately made into a strong alcoholic cordial called aguardiente (burning water), 90 per cent. being alcohol,

1. Jesus. 2. Maria José. 3. Hernando Cortés.



Cortés' own hacienda near Cuernavaca, showing the original pots in which he made sugar in 1520.



Inscription on an inside window at Cortés' hacienda, said to have been written by him in 1520.

which when reduced and mixed with brown sugar makes rum. The crystals remain in the jars and come out as 81 per cent. of sugar.

The two other sides of this great courtyard are utilised for factory work, and the fourth consists of stables for horses, mules and donkeys. The funniest old man, a regular Mexican Abraham—and after all, why not, if, as some suppose, the garden of Eden was in Southern Mexico?—was mending harness; near at hand was a huge box-like sedan-chair, or rather Indian palanquin, in which ladies were carried to Cuernavaca, or even to Mexico City, until quite recently, swung between two mules. Imagine, over those mountain passes—for the road, like the railway, reaches an elevation of ten thousand feet—imagine traversing that track, swung between two mules!

I prefer to ride astride, thank you; the only reasonable way for a woman to mount, if she wishes to accomplish long and tiring journeys on horseback.

We had a wonderful luncheon at the Cortés hacienda. Our party of thirty-six arrived in due time, and, according to an old custom still in vogue, the host (Señor Robles) sat at the head of the table, then came all his guests, and at the bottom—"below the salt," as in days of yore—the book-keepers and heads of departments. It was a delightful experience; everyone was so kind. Nearly all talked French, English or German, and those who could not do so spoke Spanish slowly and distinctly, and did their best to understand my attempts in the latter language, which anyway amused them!

That Cortés hacienda was the strangest, funniest old building, more like a monastery than anything else; and everything connected with it, even the meal itself, was an episode in one's life to be treasured in remembrance until death. The whole place was teeming with poetry and romance; every corner was a picture, every room

contained enough subject matter to fill a volume. Intrigue, conspiracy, murder, all, all lay hidden in the silent stones of those great walls and arched domes.

That night, on our return to Cuernavaca, I had a real Mexican dinner at Señor Ramon Olivero's, who, like so many Mexicans, had been educated at Stonyhurst College. The Mexican menu, kindly composed by his wife, was representative of the every-day fare of the country.

“Sopa de Tortilla” (soup, made with the Indian corn tortilla, and flavoured).

“Fiambre” (pigs' feet, served cold, and delicious, especially the salad, made from the green melon fruit).

“Carnero” (mutton salted and baked, with vegetables).

“Calabazitas con quese” (pumpkins and cheese cooked together, most palatable).

“Enchiladas” (tortillas rolled up with red chilli and cooked in milk).

“Frijoles” (beans, the national dish of the country).

“Merengue” (eggs and milk, a sort of meringue which the Mexicans love).

Then we had a delightful sweet, a pumpkin boiled in a sugar vat. Mexicans take half-a-dozen pumpkins, prick holes at either end, put them into a net, attached by a string, so as not to lose them in the great cauldron, and let them boil for a day. The pumpkin becomes brown all over, and almost resembles a plum-pudding; it tastes something like a candied melon, is called “Calabaza en tacha,” and, strangely enough, if a girl jilts a man, the Mexicans use the expression “Dar Calabazas,” meaning that she gave him “sweet pumpkin,” *i.e.*, his congé.

Orange tea—“Hojas de naranjo”—was served instead of coffee, and we found it very refreshing. It is made from the fresh young leaves of the orange-tree, which are treated like tea, and have boiling water poured over them. This is often served instead of black coffee.

Among the guests was Licenciado Cecilio Robelo, a most interesting man, who has written several works on the languages of the Indians. He remarked how strange it is that although the Aztecs drove out the more ancient Toltec people, yet they retained the Toltec names, which survive to-day. There are a number of native writers of this kind, men who have devoted themselves to unearthing different tribes and languages, to tracing the similarity of peoples or contrasting the workmanship of the ancient races which are to be found all over the country.

The Governor, who was also present, had ordered a band to play outside during dinner, and when he gave me his arm to walk home, we found the entire street crowded with the inhabitants, who had come to hear the strains, which said music, following us, made harmony beneath my window long after I was in bed. Soft tones of melody, and the low notes of the guitar, lulled me to sleep.

The next morning I had to be up at 5.30 to live through one of the longest and yet most interesting days of my life, owing to its strange variety. First a party of us—ten in number—had a special train for an hour along the line to the south, where we bid good-bye to such modern luxuries, and travelled over the mountains on horse-back for a week. Could anything be more delightful?

Our first visit was to the hacienda of San Vicente, belonging to the daughter of the famous Juarez, who did so much for Mexico. In this ancient building sugar was made on all the newest principles, and with the latest machinery, a strong contrast to the picturesque old system of Cortés' day, but more than twice as profitable. The brown pots had given place to modern moulds, and everything was thoroughly up to date.

The ride from thence was most interesting ; we passed through hundreds of acres of sugar-cane, weeded and watered just like flowers in an English garden. As a rule it

bears once in eighteen months, but according to the district it sometimes yields twice in even six months. The sugars stood as high as twenty feet, and the ground was all irrigated, little troughs of water running through between the cane. Hundreds of people were cutting it—such picturesque-looking folk! The cutting was done by means of a sickle, with which the branches—if one may so designate the leaf-like shoots—were clipped off. Mules fetched the cane, stacked in bundles, to the tram-line, where it was quickly run along to the factory, and subsequently worked into the purest of pure sugar. When it is ripe, all the lower part of the sugar-cane is brown and withered, but the top remains the brightest hue of green, something like an apple-leaf in spring. The contrast between those strong black-green organ cactus and the soft green tendrils of the cane is very beautiful, the effect being heightened by the white shirts and red blankets of the peons. Mules and carts scattered here and there added life and picturesqueness to the scene. A sugar-field is an impressive sight. Hop-picking forms a pretty and fascinating picture, but add to that tropical verdure, deep-blue skies, dark-skinned Indians, and the scene becomes absolutely entrancing.

At a still more wonderful old hacienda, called Chiconcuac—for we were now in the South, which is particularly rich in these splendid old properties—we halted to drink milk and admire some magnificent arches and pillars, raised by the monks of yore, and then again mounted our steeds in order to ride to some of the most famous ruins in the world.

What a cavalcade we were! Our original party consisted of ten gentlemen, the daughter of the Secretary of State, Señorita Flores, and myself, but later we were met by our official escort, which had left Cuernavaca at one a.m. with extra riding horses. We had also a guard of Rurales, so that we eventually counted fifty-three mounted persons.



Colonel Alarcón, Governor of the State of Morelos, with two of his guard.



Reception at Alpuyeca, State of Morelos.

Besides these, many of the most important men from the neighbouring villages had come to pay their respects to the Governor, and the numbers of such visitors were for days continually swelling. When we reached the mountains and were obliged to ride in single file, we looked indeed a formidable army.

The first excitement was at the village of Alpuyeca, where a triumphal arch had been erected, and the word "Wellcome" (with two "l's") was hanging above the flowers. What a strange sight it seemed! Two or three hundred Indians, smart and clean-looking in their white shirts and trousers, standing—hat in hand—to do honour to the Governor of their State! The Mayor and chief men all came forward in turn, and after shaking hands with Colonel Alarcón, shook hands with me also.

The chief street was gaily decorated with flags, floral banners, hanging festoons, and the municipal buildings bore the kindly inscription "Wellcome to our English Visitor." A platform had been put up adorned with pink calico and a muslin curtain, on which stood three children, forming an allegorical group. The tableau represented the Independence of Mexico, and the centre child, wearing a red cap, stood for Liberty. The school-children marched before us carrying flags, and the band played, yes, a brass band of seventeen performers, with trumpets, flutes and drums.

Every village in Mexico has its band, for the people dearly love music—not always particularly tuneful, sometimes, indeed, harmony in uproar—but whatever it may be, it delights their hearts. Colonel Alarcón had invited his friend Salvador Gutierrez to join our mountain expedition, and, being an expert photographer as well as an able soldier, he took pictures of the same.

We passed through at least a dozen villages altogether during our trip through the mountains, and in each village the band played, arches were erected, and every sign of

love and respect was paid to the Governor of the State. It was wonderfully interesting, this peep into other days, as it were, the days of chivalry and romance. The Jefe Politico (head political officer or sheriff of the district), under whom serves the Alcalde (Mayor), was always ready to receive us, hat in hand, a smile on his face, and holding bouquets of tropical flora. These Jefe Politicos were invariably gentlemen; sometimes they spoke French, and their unfailing courtesy and powers of entertaining were amazing.

The village mayors were Indians whose fathers, and often they themselves, had been bandits and robbers, for only a quarter of a century ago it was impossible to travel safely anywhere in Mexico. For instance, the State of Guerrero, through which we passed, has only been quieted within the last few years. The strongest measures have been adopted in order to stamp out lawlessness, and even to-day, if a man be known to have committed robbery or murder, he is caught, informed of the charge against him, and considered guilty unless he can prove his innocence. If he cannot do this, he is taken out of the village by soldiers, and forthwith shot. This treatment is severe, but it has produced the most wonderful results. As late as ten years ago the tracts of country we passed through were unsafe, and even in the beginning of the twentieth century every member of our party, with the exception of my lady companion and myself, was armed with pistols, while all the officials carried a sword and gun in his elaborately embroidered leather and silver-mounted saddle.

As we neared the famous Aztec ruins of Xochicalco, pronounced So-chi-cal-co, which are said to be at least three thousand years old, we began a steep ascent, so steep, indeed, that it was almost like walking upstairs, only the poor horses had a very uneven stairway to mount, as they stepped from crag to crag. That single-

file procession, headed by the Governor, I following in his rear, took memory back to many a happy ride in Iceland, and many a pleasant day in Morocco, where the mountain paths are similarly uneven and wild. As we wound round the mountain—over fifty in number—we often saw three complete lines of armed horsemen below us, so steep was the serpentine path of our single-line cavalcade.

The sun was shining in its glory. But we were all wearing sombreros, and what did sunburnt and scorching cheeks matter when one could command such a view, and had gone through such an experience, such a day of picturesque surprises?

CHAPTER XIX.

AZTEC RUINS OF XOCHICALCO.

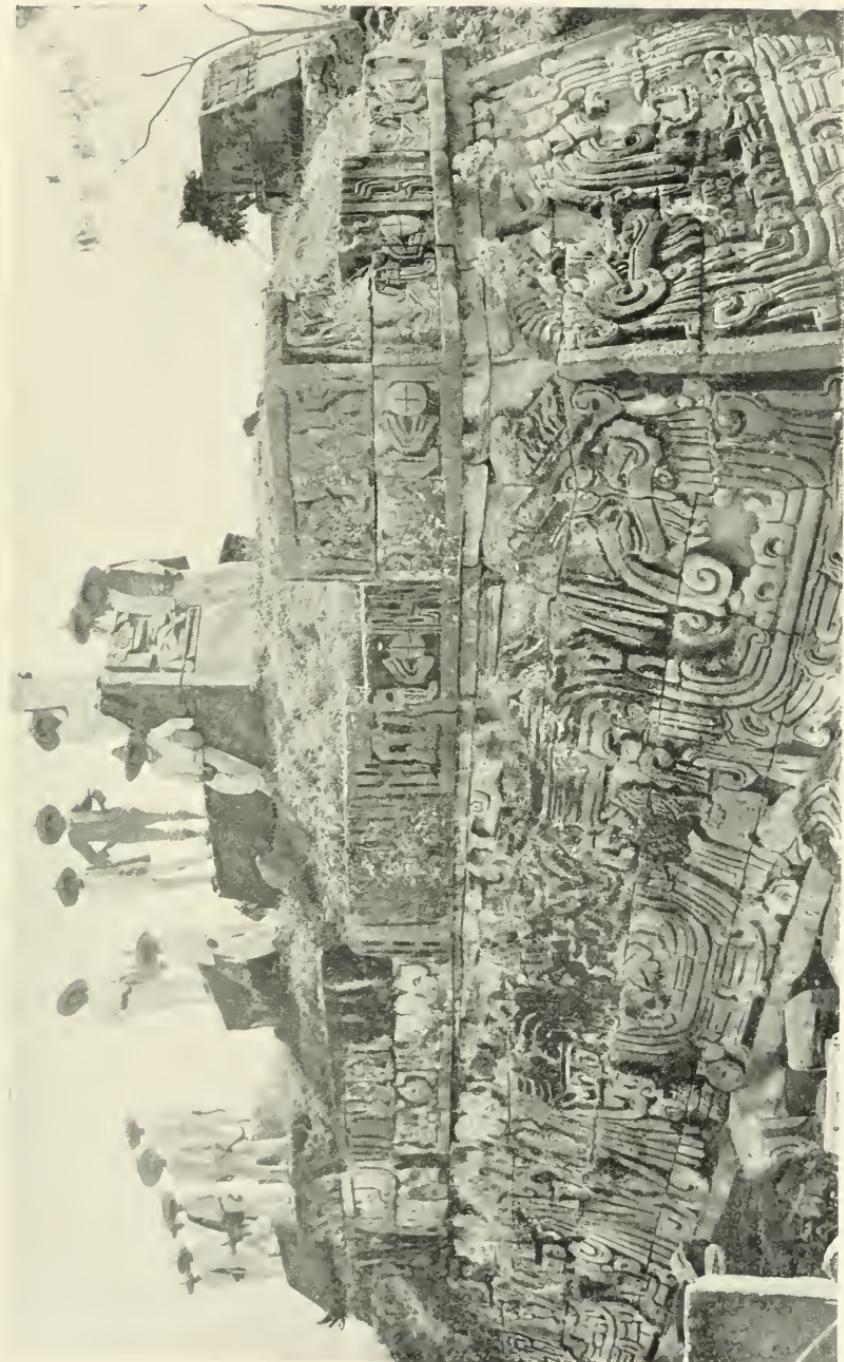
UP, up, up we went, round and round, backwards and forwards, our long line of fifty-three horses and riders wound its way. At times it became so precipitous we could see four or five serpentines of horsemen below us on the mountain side. The lake beneath, where many battles were fought between the Aztecs and the Spaniards, became smaller and smaller to the south ; the town of Cuernavaca, seventy miles to the north, dwindled to a tiny speck, and still it seemed as if we should never reach the top.

Then in a moment, as if a curtain had been lifted, we clambered up an extra steep incline, and——!

No words can describe the scene. There stood the famous ancient fortress of Xochicalco, and, more than that, the whole place was alive with humanity. A couple of hundred men at least had come from the villages for miles around in order to express their joy at the Governor's visit, and there they stood, on the patch of green sward high up on that mountain peak right away in the wilds of Southern Mexico, where tropical vegetation filled the valley below, and above only rocks, caverns, carved stones, and history yet unwritten were to be found.

Our horses all drew up in a bunch ; Indians swarmed before us, while on our right stood one of the greatest fortresses of the ancient world. We were officially received

Xochicalco ruins.



by the Jefe Politico de Tetecala, named Enrique Dabaire, and the Jefe Politico de Cuernavaca, Rutilio Balcazar.

Another Indian band struck up the national air, and the five chief men of the surrounding villages stepped forward, each bearing a couple of bouquets of wild flowers, and, with the grace of kings, presented one to their Governor, and one to me, before we had even dismounted. In such fashion the Aztecs of old greeted Cortés, in such fashion their descendants welcomed us to-day. The same type of face, the same manner of welcome.

Tears started to my eyes on receiving those floral offerings, to find rough, bronzed men, the descendants of that great Aztec race, brave as lions—one had only to look at their faces to notice the strength and determination—bid me welcome, together with a hearty handshake. It was very touching.

There were the ruins of what had once been a fortress, here were the descendants of the very people who lived there, two thousand, perhaps five thousand, years ago, and all around us lay God's work, one of the most beautiful panoramas surely that this world can disclose. We were on the top of a sugar-loaf peak; below lay deep gorges and valleys, and miles and miles of cultivated plains, where grew sugar, rice and coffee, to be exported perhaps to feed folk in that very London, some thousands of miles away, which held all I loved most, not one of whom was with me to enjoy those strange and wonderful scenes—and here, what a curious collection we made! One Englishwoman—one of the few women who have climbed to Xochicalco—a couple of Englishmen, an American, a sprinkling of Spaniards, or descendants of Spaniards, and hundreds of Indian Aztecs!

We lunched in a summer-house or canopy of flowers the natives had erected for that purpose, because they knew "there was no sun in the Señora's land," and they feared

the heat for their visitor. The top was composed of palm leaves, and hanging down, as do grapes in a viney, were bunches of flowers ; the supports on which the roof rested, were entirely covered with creepers and blossoms. This love of flowers, this choice of beautiful colours, the artistic pottery produced in almost every village, denote the artistic development of the race. That bower of tropical vegetation would have done honour to a Parisian florist, and could not have been bought by him for thousands and thousands of francs.

I do not quite know how that luncheon was dragged up to the ruins—probably on men's backs, or on pack-mules—but I do know it was ready when we arrived, and that we thoroughly enjoyed it. Even ice, think of it, ice was there, thoughtfully included in the “bill of fare” by the Governor. It was a delicious repast, and I still remember a particular dish of scalloped ham that came out of one of those surprising tins.

After the meal the Governor in his usual thoughtful way gave all the food that was left to the Indians. The various Alcaldes and other officials came into the bower at his invitation to drink healths with him. They had such charming manners. Off came their hats, they bowed low, and before emptying their glass always raised it to me with a little inclination of the head. Inborn courtesy, the inborn courtesy of gentlemen, is more often found among such people than is generally supposed.

The sides of our summer-house were open, and all those strange folk squatted on the ground around us, watching the progress of the meal ; they did not talk, they just sat and gazed. On our left the constant clapping of hands was heard where three women made tortillas for the party, otherwise our followers were all of the masculine sex.

Over the roof, standing amid wreaths of what we should call hothouse flowers, was an inscription about three yards



Bower of orchids, flowers, and palms, put up by the Aztec Indians at Xochicalco ruins.



One of the war-plumed Aztecs carved on the Xochicalco ruins.

long which, to my surprise, consisted of the words "Well-come to Mrs. Alec Fweedie." The two "l's" in "well-come," and the substitution of F. for T., were charming touches. Those Indians had sent a messenger many, many miles to Cuernavaca to find out how to write their words of greeting in the English tongue; they painted them quite well, in grey, picked out with red, and I finally bore the inscription home in triumph from its wondrous perch and unique surroundings.

These people were Aztecs. It is commonly supposed the race has died out, but this is not the case—half a million live to-day, and still speak the ancient tongue.

After luncheon, a short swarthy man stepped forward, bowing low, and addressing the Governor in Aztec, he asked if he might say something to the English lady; his name was Florentino Ramirez, and he came from the village of Tetlama. Of course, permission was at once granted. He stood opposite to us, surrounded by all those Indians, and though only a young man—perhaps, twenty-two or three years of age—he spoke as to the manner born. He was neither shy nor awkward; his voice was loud and clear, and the determined expression of his dark face denoted his descent from some great race. His words were more or less as follows:

"I am spokesman of the neighbouring villages. When we heard our beloved Governor was coming, accompanied by a lady from such a far-away land, we felt proud. We are honoured that anyone should come to see our ruins, and we thank you, Señora, from the bottom of our hearts, for you must have undertaken a long and tedious journey to come so far to see our Xochicalco. That you are going to write a book about Mexico delights our hearts, and we have come from far and near, and done our best to bid you welcome and manifest our gratitude. We are only 'the people,' but we have hearts and sympathies, and both have been aroused to-

day by the visit of Colonel Alarcón and the English authoress. You have come from a land of great civilisation to visit our wild country ; but, Señora, you must remember that five thousand years ago, when England was unknown, our ancestors raised those ruins," and he waved his hand with a theatrical air as he spoke, and pointed proudly to the fortress.

Charming words, given with great simplicity and withal great determination. The man spoke, as I have said before, as to the manner born, and yet he lived far away from a railway, had indeed never seen such a thing, or any form of modern civilisation. He was just an Indian lad, born and bred in the country ; but—the descendant of a great race ! One of my English friends kindly replied in Spanish ; when he stopped the youth again stepped forward, and said :

" You have addressed me in a foreign tongue, Señor, and I thank you, and will translate your words to my other friends. I can speak Spanish too, you see, a foreign tongue to me, and I thank you for what you have said on behalf of my friends. This is a great day for us and we shall always remember it. Such a day has never been before at Xochicalco. We would fain add that this humble reception, although poor and inadequate, has been tendered with all our good-will, and from the bottom of our hearts."

Was not this wonderful ? It all seemed extraordinary to me. The spot whereon we stood had been the scene of bloodshed and plunder thousands of years ago ; these very hills even a short time previously were unsafe for travellers, a fully-armed escort was necessary, and yet there we found ourselves to-day amidst flowers and beauty, with music and merriment, peace and good-will !

After luncheon we spent some hours looking over the old fortress which some say was a temple, but I think not, for there are no signs of altars, or burial chambers, and for religious purposes it stands in an awkward position, perched

on high with steep paths only for ascent. It seemed to me from its position far more likely to have been a fortress. It is a square, and being situated right at the very top of a mountain, it commands a view on all sides over miles and miles. The base is somewhat plain; above rest three sets of massive stones, one above the other, forming a wall which slants narrower at the top. As a rule fifteen of these large stones—each about four to six feet in width—compose a side. They are not all alike. Some are grey, some red, of porphyritic granite, and again we ask—as is usual when viewing such ancient work—"How were such enormous stones brought all these miles, and dragged up that precipitous incline?"

On the top is a magnificently-carved coping, from which the stones slant outward at the edge, to give grace to the whole. These wonderful stones are completely covered over with strange devices and colossal figures; there are several Indians with their massive war-feather headgear wearing jewels round their necks, and ponderous earrings; jewels fasten on their feathers, and jewels and ornaments form breast-plates and cuffs. The figures are *not* crude; on the contrary they are well modelled. Most of them sit cross-legged like Chinese gods, but one who is standing, partly remains. The straight broad nose, and forehead sloping backwards, are noticeable, which remain peculiarities of the Aztec race to-day. Several of the warriors have the first finger bent up as if to call attention. There are three complete figures, besides bits of others, particularly a large hand and arm which evidently belonged to the man supporting the stair-way, part of which is still in good preservation. Of course the wings of the Aztec eagle appear on each side of the fortress; that same eagle which forms the coat of arms of Mexico to-day. Serpents with two heads are visible, for Aztecs worshipped the Serpent as the God of Wisdom. Strange and wonderful hieroglyphics and

mythological figures, and a + can be distinctly seen on the photograph, but alas! the key to all these writings has yet to be found!

There was originally a second tower on the top of the edifice—some imagine a third—but only a few of the stones remain upright to-day; the rest have fallen down and are lying around, either whole or in bits; others have been carted away for building purposes! From the centre of the fortress there was a means of escape, and it is said seven subterranean passages, but the place has so far not been very thoroughly explored. We went through one of these passages, bumping our heads and stumbling over rocks and stones, till we found ourselves in an arched chamber excavated in the rock, the dome being in the form of a pointed Gothic arch. This was a curious anomaly, as the arch scarcely ever appeared in Aztec architecture.

One of these subterranean passages extends many hundred feet, and is about nine feet high. The ancient pavement seems to have been over a foot thick, and the walls are actually of masonry. At the end is a room measuring eighty feet.* The platform measures 380 by 285, and the Temple or fortress 65 feet from East to West, and 58 from North to South.

I was enormously impressed by the Xochicalco ruins. The position of the fortress was grand, commanding as it did so extensive a view over what was once a vast lake lying towards Mexico City; the solidity of the work, the precision with which the stones were fitted into one another, all was marvellous; and yet a tiny sapling, grown to be a great tree-root, had literally forced up one of these blocks of enormous weight, forced it right up out of place!

There was something awe-inspiring about those ruins, in fact they impressed me more than did those of Mitla subsequently. The base of the hill, on which they stand,

* "Prehistoric America," by Nadaillac.

is nearly two miles in circumference, and the last ascent about 400 feet. The carving was so extraordinary, so artistic and clearly cut, the figures so true to life, not in the least grotesque, as are many of those to be seen in Egyptian ruins; but these had been chiselled by master hands, no one knows how many decades ago. The dresses, the jewels, all seemed to recall that Aztec race which must indeed have been a people of great culture and refinement, and artistic in a high degree.

The position was well nigh impregnable, for what band of warriors could climb up to attack, while even a handful of men thrust spears or hurled stones down upon them? Two or three hours were not sufficient to explore this interesting spot, but as there is no accommodation anywhere for miles, we had to get on, before the darkness of night folded her wings around us.

It was January, with a heat like that of August in England, for we were no longer nearly eight thousand feet above the sea, as in Mexico City, and as soon as one descends a few thousand feet, the temperature changes to an extraordinary degree. All the various village mayors, the *Jefe Politicos* of the different districts, had to be shaken hands with, and then we left.

The Indians all wanted to shake hands too, many spoke kindly words in the Aztec tongue, others brought further little floral offerings. One of these latter was particularly interesting, for it was a flower of wood, a sort of gourd-like thing, quite pretty in shape, something like a long-leaved passion flower, only brown, but alas! it was brittle, and although one of our party rode with it most carefully for miles, petal after petal fell with the jolting of his horse.

Several friends in the City had asked me to be photographed on horseback. They wished to see my habit skirt when mounted astride, apparently thinking it must be a most unsightly arrangement, so, I asked Señor Gutierrez to

kindly take advantage of a shady spot and do the deed. As I spoke, the little man who had made that strange speech rushed forward, and placing himself at my mare's head, asked if he might be photographed with the lady. Therefore the descendant of the Aztec tribe, who proved himself such an orator, is luckily in the picture.

Down the hill we rode again in single file; the horses are marvellously sure-footed, especially those which are not shod—naturally, iron shoes do slide over volcanic rock—and away we went to the famous sugar hacienda of Miacatlan. The sun was just setting when we arrived about six o'clock, and certainly the scene was remarkable. The wonderful old house with its strange arches, domes, and cellars, which resembled an ancient monastery, was, of course, built by the Spaniards a couple of hundred years ago. Time was then of no value, slaves cost no money, and walls eight or ten feet thick, with vaulted roofs made of solid blocks of stone, were customary. These old haciendas rarely have a bit of wood anywhere; wood and iron were not used for girders and beams, and the stone floors, walls and roofs will probably stand to all eternity. Strangely enough, I at once recognised my host and hostess as old friends—at least, old friends for Mexico. I had met Señor and Señora Romualdo Pasquel at the President's Christmas party. Their welcome was most warm, and our whole caravan passed the night at Miacatlan.

Imagine a party of fifty-three men and beasts pulling up at an English country house and requesting a night's board and lodging! We were a dozen for the dining-room, and bed-rooms were found for us, while the rest of the escort sought accommodation elsewhere.

One could scarcely have expected to find dinner-table decorations in a Mexican hacienda, but such was the case. Covers were laid for twenty—the house party being eight. The serviettes were charmingly folded, lovely tropical

flowers were arranged upon the cloth, blooms were in the finger-bowls, and everything was as well-ordered and modern as in a large city. The cooking was perfect, the wines manifold, electric light everywhere, yet all the floors, even in the bed-rooms, were of red brick; just one more instance of those strange contrasts one finds so continually in the land of Montezuma. A land indeed of paradoxes!

Our luggage was limited, but the Governor had arranged we should each have a bag carried by the mules with the commissariat. In my small case, mostly containing under-wear, I had one light silk evening gown, which folded into small space, so that I might occasionally look like a "lady." That reminds me of a man with whom I had ridden for some days. Never having seen me in anything but a divided skirt, linen shirt, top boots, and sombrero hat, in a faltering voice at last he asked :

"Do you ever wear a real dress, Señora?"

"Oh, yes, always at home," I replied.

He looked hard at me.

"Do you ever wear a low—evening—dress?" he stammered, as if ashamed to ask such a question.

"Often," I answered; "we wear low dresses more in London than in any city of the world, because we practically dress for dinner every evening."

"Oh," he gasped, evidently much relieved that people did not walk about London in a riding dress!

Someone had given me a box of chocolates on leaving Cuernavaca, and when I opened my box at Miacatlan to take out that precious silk dress, my hand encountered something hot and liquid. It was the chocolates, which had melted to a syrup! Luckily my *only* frock had escaped.

Everything in that small case was so hot, it felt as though it had just been taken out of an oven, and

yet the force of the baking sun had been partially checked by grass mattings tied over the packs.

We were up next morning before four a.m., and started off soon after, in order to avoid riding during the heat of the day. A strange sight presented itself below my window. It was quite dark, save for the flicker of the moon and stars; but there stood all the horses saddled and ready, champing at their bits; there, groping about in the semi-darkness, were the Rurales with clinking spurs and gleaming swords, while behind stood the servants and pack mules; beyond were some three hundred farm mules drinking in turn at the fountain, before going off to their work in the fields, which consisted of bringing in the sugar-cane. The sky was still dark, electric lights illuminated the heavy stone alcoves, birds were singing, and the great chapel bell rang forth the hour of five as we bade farewell to our generous entertainers and started again on our way. We were glad of our coats in the fresh morning air, and equally glad to dispense with them an hour and a half later, when the sun had risen.

We breakfasted at ten o'clock in a wonderful tropical garden in the village of Coatlan, on our way to the famous caves of Cacahuimilpa. That village was particularly interesting, it was so typically Mexican. The people, knowing we were coming, had cut large branches off trees and stuck them into the sides of the road for a mile outside the village itself, so as to form a kind of avenue. Every man, woman and child was out to receive us. They had erected a triumphal arch, their brass band struck up as we passed beneath it, and everyone stood hat in hand to welcome our party. A table had been set up in the orange grove, and there, beneath oranges, bananas, cocoanuts and melon trees, we enjoyed our meal. The endless hand-clapping of tortilla-makers was with us as usual, for the women had come to the garden, made their little fires,

and were busy making cakes for our party. The horses stood in the little market-place below the church; their saddles covered with extra sacking to keep them from getting heated, but in spite of the coverings mine became so scorched I was hardly able to sit upon it. Hot saddles are dangerous, and so well do the Rurales know this fact, that when waiting they put their big grey felt hats over the leathers to keep them cool, and are content with a handkerchief upon their own heads.

It is said that no white man can ever pack a mule, and certainly the dark gentlemen often excited my amazement by the way in which they secured heavy wine cases to the backs of the animals, and then covered the whole load with a grass mat; it was wonderful. Nothing ever slipped, nothing ever went wrong. The only sad part about it was the heat itself, and every night I used to find everything inside my little case absolutely melting, including the soap, which had nearly turned "soft," though, luckily, it did not run, like those chocolates. But this great heat only lasts a few hours daily, say from twelve to three.

Talking of pack mules reminds me of an awkward experience. On one occasion, while toiling up an exceedingly steep path, we suddenly met thirty-three mules laden crossways with planks of sawn wood, coming down. They only had three drivers, and the path was so narrow it seemed practically impossible to pass. I do not even now understand how the difficulty was overcome, but some of our party dismounted and succeeded in finding the animals a foothold off our track; still, as their planks were some ten feet long, the slightest deviation from the straight line on the part of the beasts of burden would have meant a nasty hit for some of us, while a restive mule or horse must have fallen down the precipice. Neither of the parties could go back, there was no room to turn, therefore pass we must,

and pass we did ; but I think everyone felt devoutly thankful when the manœuvre was accomplished without accident.

The country policemen are very funny. We often passed two or three, perhaps a dozen of them. They are simply Indians, shoeless, and garbed in the ordinary white cotton ; but they each carry an old-fashioned shot gun, and of course the big sword (machete) of the country. They are not particularly gentle in their treatment of prisoners, and make use of their weapons on the slightest provocation. Prisoners, who after trial are found to have merited a long sentence, are imprisoned for a while and then drafted into the army.

It all seems to answer very well, but then Mexico is, of course, still in the transition stage. If she go as much ahead, however, in the next quarter of a century as she has done in the last, she will ere long take her place among the nations of the world.

I remember one large hacienda we passed, where a tragedy had just been enacted. A Mexican father lived there with his two sons, and experienced considerable difficulty with the peons, whom his sons in their turn treated somewhat harshly, knocking them about. The natives were sullen, and vowed vengeance. For some time none of the trio ever ventured forth alone, but always went about armed and guarded. One fine day, however, the eldest son, tired of his escort, started forth to ride to some distant village. He never returned, and I was shown the spot where the murdered body, stabbed from behind in several places, had been found !

“ The younger son will meet the same fate,” was remarked, “ unless he mends his ways in dealing with his labourers.”

And yet there are other people, such, for example, as the Amor brothers, who are so much beloved that they ride anywhere alone fearlessly, and as often as not unarmed.

Indians are slow to rouse ; but they value life little, and

grow murderous and vindictive on occasion, particularly when under the influence of drink.

Those days of riding through the mountains amid all the tropical vegetation—so new to me—were delightful; even the scorpions and yellow and green lizards were interesting, and then everyone was so kind and jovial, courteous and thoughtful, there never seemed to occur a hitch of any sort. The Governor's powers of organisation proved a constant marvel. We were away from trains and telegraphs, he was moving with a small army, so to speak, and yet nothing was ever late, and nothing was ever missing. Our fare was of the best—everything canned, of course—and even ice never failed, a veritable blessing in such heat. Colonel Alarcón's soldierly instincts showed him a born commander of men; he never seemed lacking in resources, never got in a fuss; indeed, he appeared to have less to do than anyone, though all the time he was organising the whole affair.

Some men are born to rule and direct others. Colonel Alarcón is one of these, for was he not the finest of soldiers? With all this strength of character nothing was beneath his notice. If we passed over a dangerous bit of ground, or crossed a river where the bank was slippery, he, leading the way, would turn round and ask:

“Is the Señora all right?”

“Si, si; muchas gracias; but you know I am all right,” I once replied.

“I like to see and hear for myself, Señora,” he answered.

He would stop to pick some unusual flower to show me by the way, or pull a wild fruit he wished me to taste; in fact, he proved again what is so true in life, that the strongest men have the softest sides to their characters, just as the most womanly women can evince manly courage on occasion.

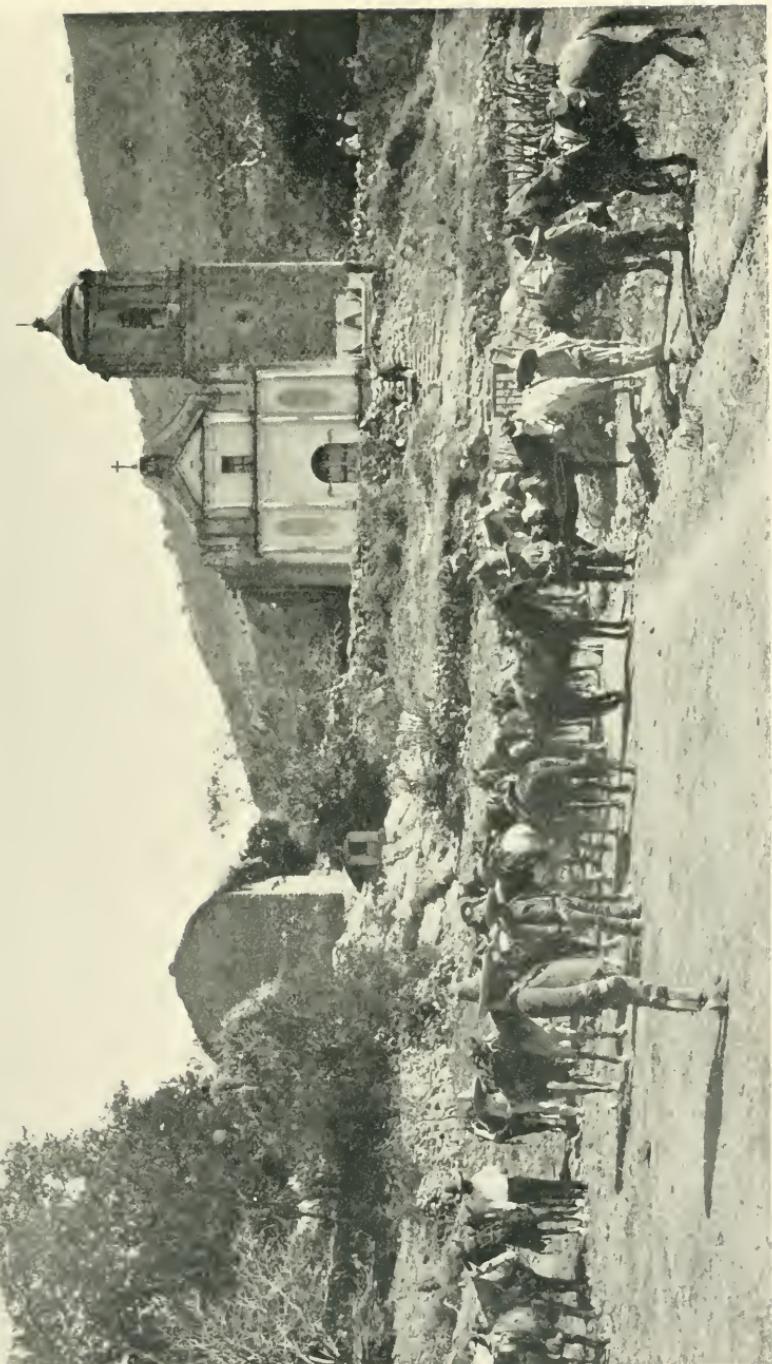
CHAPTER XX.

ONE OF THE WONDERS OF THE WORLD.

IT was fearfully hot as after luncheon we rode down from the little hostelry in the village of Cacahuimilpa—pronounced Ca-ca-hui-mil-pa—to the grottoes of the same name.

At mid-day the heat in Southern Mexico is almost overpowering, and but for our enormous sombreros, we could not have endured it. The horses rarely stumbled over the volcanic rocks, often as steep as a staircase, and far more uneven; but horses get accustomed to anything, and the Mexican breed are no exception to this rule; nevertheless, on the return journey, one of the poor beasts unfortunately slipped and tumbled over a nasty ledge, his rider cutting his head badly. He was not able to leave Cacahuimilpa with us the next morning, but followed some hours later with the guard our good Governor left behind to look after him. We had so many Rurales with us, we could easily spare three for the purpose. They were all most polite men, ever eager to perform some kindly act, shade a saddle, tighten girths, flick away mosquitoes, and in fact do anything they could think of to add to my comfort. Instinctive courtesy, perhaps, to such a strange being as a horsewoman!

The Rurales often use flint and steel for kindling fires. They are most handy men, reminding me of sailors by their willingness and ability to do almost anything and



Some of our horses and soldiers waiting near the Caves of Cacahuimilpa.

everything ; unlike the majority of sailors, however, they are crack shots as well as skilled horsemen, to which qualities the peace of Mexico is largely due to-day.

When we dismounted at a large cave-like opening in a wall of rock, the national air of Mexico sounded suddenly from the dark depths below. The village band had been sent on before, to greet us. The effect was most strange in its echoing tones, and the national anthem was followed by the President Diaz march. The aperture was large, but behind the great opening loomed inky blackness. Gathered round the mouth of the cave were numberless Indians, and a sprinkling of richer folk. Candles were distributed to the company, which by this time must have swelled in numbers to something like a couple of hundred, as many people round about had availed themselves of the opportunity of joining our party, permission to do so having been graciously given them by the Governor.

"You had better leave your hat," someone remarked. "It may be warm inside the caves, and besides, in the low passages there will be no room for it." Accordingly, the sombrero was left behind, for which I felt heartily thankful later. My friend also advised me to put on shoes instead of riding boots, explaining the climb would be difficult in parts, and my boots would probably get cut. He was right !

Colonel Alarcón, according to custom, offered me his arm, and escorted me down into one of the greatest wonders of the world !

The descent was easy, for a road-way had been made ; but it was really very impressive to see, in twos and twos, about a couple of hundred people marching solemnly into impenetrable blackness, to the strains of martial music. Each person carried a long lighted candle, but before we returned to our starting point, six and a half hours later, those candles had nearly burnt out.

"The caves are wonderful," everyone had told me ; but

no one had attempted to explain how wonderful, simply because no words could fitly describe them. Those who have seen the well-known Mammoth Caves of Kentucky, unanimously agree even they are not so grand or marvellous as these almost unknown wonders buried in Southern Mexico.

For four hours we walked on, tumbling, stumbling, clattering, or crawling—no one should try to penetrate, or attempt to go beyond the first two easy caverns, who is not physically strong. We had been up at four that morning, had driven for a couple of hours, and ridden for three, and I must own that before we left those monstrous caves I was quite done up, and feel it only right to advise no woman to attempt the same feat unless she can sleep at the village, or in the caves themselves, the night before and the night after; those grottoes are quite enough for anyone to explore in a single day, without any other exercise whatever.

Now to attempt to give some little idea of the caves. They were originally formed by a river, the water-line of which is distinctly visible, while in places the ground is marked with wave-ripples like the sand of a beach. Then, again, many stones are round and polished, the result of constant rolling by water; and still more wonderful, two rivers flow beneath them, probably through caves just as marvellous, which no man has yet dared penetrate. These two rivers which come out beneath the caves are called San Jeromino and San Corralejo. The first has been measured and found to contain a minimum flow of water of 5.5 cubic metres per second. The other has not yet been measured, but is supposed to contain about four cubic metres per second. They join and enter the mountain one hundred metres below the grottoes, under which they pass, reappearing after a fall of five hundred feet at a distance of three kilometres. No boat has ever entered the enormous caverns through which these rivers flow,

because, with waters rushing at such velocity, and a fall of five hundred feet, it would be madness to attempt to do so. Plans have been suggested of letting a boat in with trusty ropes and grappling irons to pull her back ; but there might be within a sudden fall of water, and boat and occupants be whirled over the edge before the people outside had time to drag them back. Mysterious and marvellous are the rivers below the caves.

Above these torrents of water are the caves themselves, which form undoubtedly one of the greatest natural phenomena of the world ; and they, too, were made by water. That very same water which in millions of years washed them out and is now busily engaged in washing out others below !

Very little is yet known of these wonderful caves of Cacahuamilpa, and some geologist has a great work waiting for him. In all my wanderings I have never seen anything like them. Niagara is great ; the rapids of Uleaborg in Finland are wonderful. The Matterhorn or Mont Blanc are splendid. These caves, however, are so endless, so extraordinary, so colossal, that it seems as if they cannot possibly be real.

One sits down amazed to see a cavern lighted at different points by half-a-dozen magnesium wires, and at least two hundred candles, yet which is barely illumined at all. One keeps on repeating, "Am I awake ? Is this real or is it a dream ? What power made these things ? What is man or man's work, what is the greatest cathedral in the world compared with this ? "

I believe we went through about seven caverns, and our party of two hundred Indians all carrying lights, barely made a flicker in that intense gloom—lights were nothing in the vast space. Rockets were sent up—rockets which were known to ascend two hundred and fifty feet, but which nowhere reached the top ; the height is more probably somewhere about five or six hundred feet, or twice that of

St. Paul's Cathedral ; who could tell in that obscurity ? Think of a stone roof, without any supports, over a stone chamber, inside which one St. Paul's on the top of another might be placed !

The size alone appalled, but the stalactites and stalagmites almost petrified one with amazement. Many of them have joined, making rude pillars a couple of hundred feet high, and perhaps a hundred feet in diameter at the base. Others have formed grotesque shapes. A seal upon the ground is positively life-like ; a couple of monster Indian idols ; faces and forms innumerable ; here an old woman bent nearly double, there a man with a basket on his head, thrones fit for kings, organs with every pipe visible, which, when tapped, ring forth deep tones. It was all so great, so wonderful, so marvellous ; I felt all the time as if I were in some strange cathedral—greater, grander and more impressive than any I had ever entered. Its aspect of power and strength paralysed me, not with fear but with intense admiration.

I am no geologist, but one or two things struck me. Many of the stalactites and stalagmites are white, of purest crystal ; they might be of soda hanging in fringes ; others again are of black, muddy compound, while yet another kind look like marble. Even to this day the drip, drip, continues, small ones are constantly forming ; and in wet weather the floor of the caverns becomes swampy.

People have penetrated four or five kilometres into the caves, but have found no way out save the entrance ; and at one spot not far within, is a cairn of stones erected in memory of a man whose skeleton, with that of his dog, was found some few years ago.

No one should ever enter alone, because no one could ever find his way out again.

The Empress Carlotta made a famous visit there, and on one of the stalagmites the fact is recorded, but it is beyond

that point climbing becomes most troublesome and dangerous, and the effects more wonderful.

Everyone of our party felt as if he were in a Turkish bath, beads of perspiration stood on every brow, and yet it was not safe to sit for more than a moment, the stones strike so cold. There are a couple of streams of clear water, and the biscuits, brandy and whiskey wisely taken by the thoughtful Governor, proved a godsend.

At times it was terribly stiff climbing, and several of the party had nasty falls, our candles giving very inefficient light ; at others it was a case of sitting down and sliding in order to get from one boulder to another ; but it was worth it all, to see such a sight, to feel the Power that made those caves, to bow before the Almighty Hand which had accomplished such work even in millions of years. There hung those great stone roofs without support of any kind—what architect could have performed such a miracle ? There stood those majestic pillars embedded in rocks above and below ; there hung yards and yards of stalactites weighing tons, and yet no stay or girder kept them in place. It was a lesson, a chapter in religion, something solemn and soul-stirring, something never to be forgotten ; one of the Creator's great mysteries, where every few yards presented some fresh revelation.

My knees were trembling, every rag of clothing I wore was as wet as when first taken from the washerwoman's tub, yet still I struggled on, fascinated, bewildered, awed, by the sights which met me at every step. Think of it ! Stumbling along for four and a half hours, even then not reaching the end, and though we returned by the easiest and quickest way it was two hours more before we found the exit !

In one of the caves the Governor proposed my health, and the party gave three cheers, which resounded again and again in that wonderful subterranean chamber, deep

down in the bowels of the earth, with a mountain above and a couple of rivers below. The military band of Cacahuimilpa accompanied us, and the effect produced by their music was stupendous. No words can express the volume of sound; because the largest band in the world could not succeed in producing the same effect of resonance in the open air which ten performers caused in those underground chambers.

I have given no idea of the immense grandeur of Cacahuimilpa, because it is impossible for me to do so. I have stood beneath the domes of St. Paul's in London, of St. Peter's in Rome, of St. Ysaak in St. Petersburg, of the Capitol in Washington, but all those buildings are small and insignificant in height and size when compared with some of those caverns.

We talk of "Before Christ" as very long ago; we think of Aztec remains a few thousand years since as an eternity distant, but what millions and millions of years it must have taken for drops of water, yes, *drops* of water, to accomplish such things as these.

In such scenes one might fancy the death-cry of departing spirits, expect to find chattering witches presiding over those weird natural altars, or hideous gnomes squatting on yonder projecting rock. Those caves contain the majesty of the Brocken, the weirdness of Peer Gynt!

A silence that can be felt, a silence so profound it may almost be heard; nothing ruffles the air, no vibrations are apparent. All is still, more still, indeed, than the grave itself.

Who made all this? What power rent those rocks? What hand holds that monstrous dome of stone on high?

Man is silent; but in this all-pervading silence, surely the voice of God speaks!

Hot, tired, and overpowered, we were plodding homewards in utter silence, when a letter was handed to a

Telégrafos del Gobierno de Morelos.

NUMERO.	PALABRAS.	VALORES.	H.	D.	R.
341	tres cien y uno	300 49 -00	300	49	-00

TELEGRAMA

De Guerraracuac, el 23 Enero de 1900 1901.
Recibido en la altan á las X h. 35 m. a.m.

Procedure in

Dr. Adolfo Grinow.

Telegrama ayer casa Mexico,

iv

"Unseen history" Died to say like at
last first. rights."

A mis hermanos y hermanas envío mi besame.

Agave Scamina.

Original telegram announcing the death of Queen Victoria, as received at Coatzacoalcos, Cacahuamilpa, Southern Mexico.

Translation

Adolfo Grimwood

"Queen Victoria died today. King Albert
first reigns. To Mr. Tweedie and Journeymen
my sympathy. Ignacio Sarurina

Telegram announcing the death of Queen Victoria. Received in Caves of Cacahuimilpa.

member of the party, by a mounted soldier, who, seeing our lights approaching the entrance, had dared venture into the grottoes to deliver his missive. We were all surprised at the man's arrival, and more surprised to find he carried an envelope. It turned out to be a telegram, which had followed our party from a village a long distance off, and had been sent on by a special horseman with instructions to overtake us at all speed. Was ever telegram received amid stranger surroundings, by a cosmopolitan collection of humanity assembled in the bowels of the earth far, far away from civilisation ?

What news that telegram contained ! It had travelled seven thousand miles across land and sea ; it had arrived at a moment when we all were over-awed by the stupendous grandeur of our surroundings, and thoroughly worn out with fatigue. At the first glance it seemed impossible to read. Men accustomed to the vagaries of foreign telegraph clerks when dealing with the English language, found, however, no difficulty in deciphering its meaning :

“QUEEN VICTORIA WAS DEAD.”

On the opposite page is a copy of the original document ; a historic telegram, truly, announcing a national calamity, and received amid the wildest possible surroundings, in the strangest possible way.

The Queen was dead ! The English-speaking people had lost her who had been their figure-head for nearly sixty-three years. The monarch to whom the whole world paid homage as a woman, and respect as a Queen, had died at Osborne on the previous day, while we, wandering over those Aztec ruins of Xochicalco, had not even heard of her illness.

Impressed as we were by the mystic grandeur of the caves, amazed at the wonders of nature, this solemn news

seemed to fit the serious thoughts of the day, thoughts which had grown in intensity with each succeeding hour. Cacahuimilpa appeared a fitting spot in which to hear of a great public misfortune. Time and place for once were in no wise "out of tune."

The Queen was dead! And within twenty-four hours the news was known in the depths of the earth in one of Nature's grandest cathedrals, thousands of miles distant from where *Victoria the Good* drew her last breath.

It was dark, and the way steep as we rode back to the village in profound silence.



San Gabriel hacienda.

CHAPTER XXI.

LIFE ON A SOUTHERN HACIENDA.

THE experiences of that night at Cacahuimilpa were amusing. One large room, through which everyone in the house was obliged to pass, had been divided in two by means of sheets hung in the middle for curtains, but as these reached neither the top, bottom, nor even sides of the room, they did not form a very efficient wall! Two beds were placed on each side of the primitive screen, and behind the curtains Señorita Flores and I retired. She thought the accommodation strange and terrible, but to me it seemed quite luxurious after nights spent in tents, on tables, garden seats, or sometimes the bare floor. My companion was very tired. No wonder. Such an expedition was exhausting for anyone; to a little Spanish girl not accustomed to exercise it must have been deadly. At last she sat herself down on the bed exclaiming, in her pretty accent :

“I am too tired to talk the English, but I am much content with you.” The first was so possible, the second a literal translation from the Spanish!

A plaster partition separated us from the next apartment used as a dining-room, but the plaster did not come within twenty-four inches of the open wood roofing, through which we could see the stars, and pigeons flying in and out. This next room was again divided by curtains, one part being

arranged for our meals, the other contained six beds closely packed together in a double row into which eight of our men had to stow themselves! We all laughed and made the best of it ; and the best on this occasion ended very happily, probably owing to a reaction after the impressiveness of the caves, and the tidings of the death of the Queen.

We felt tired that night, every man acknowledged the fact ; but sleep works marvels, and when next morning we sat round the breakfast table enjoying our coffee we were quite ready for another day "across country."

The horses and our soldier-guard outside the little dwelling created quite a sensation, and crowds of Indians sat about staring at the wondrous show.

Here, as in other parts of the country, I noticed a number of men with strange white or blue patches on their brown skins, due to pinto, that much-dreaded disease, called by the natives *Saltsayanolitzth*. It is supposed mosquitoes carry it as they are known to do yellow fever, and the Indians use a particular plant named *Ixtenetztik* for its cure, though the remedy does not usually prove very successful. Some of the people were more or less covered with this horrible disease, which is a severe form of ringworm. Dr. Patrick Manson, the great authority on tropical diseases, tells me he considers pinto is contagious, and doubts the Mexican theory of mosquito transport.

There are four kinds of pinto—red, blue, indigo and white, the last being the worst, for that means losing the pigments of the skin. In its early stages pinto can sometimes be stopped by cauterization, but later mercury is required. Unfortunately, once it really begins it is almost impossible to eradicate, and often increases with alarming rapidity. The disease is hideous, something like leprosy, which also exists in Mexico, where it is not "separated," unfortunately. Oddly enough, insanity is practically un-

known in that country, although the people intermarry constantly. The "natural" of every Scotch village apparently has no existence. The people suffer from small-pox, originally introduced by the Spanish conquerors, leprosy, pinto, and goitre, but their children are not imbecile.

The morning after our expedition to the caves we rose early, in order to accomplish as much as possible before the sun became powerful, and rode some twenty-five miles to the famous hacienda of St. Gabriel where we were to spend the night. This is one of the most historic and quaint haciendas in Southern Mexico, and belongs to the well-known family of Amor.

In all probability it was built for a monastery; it looks like the work of monks. The enormous thickness of the walls, which keep out heat in summer and cold in winter, the extraordinary solidity of everything, and the vast space it covers, bespeak a religious house. At the back is a fine stone swimming-bath; indeed, it is well supplied, not only with necessities, but luxuries.

What a place for romance, what stories might be told of love, intrigue, murder, in such a house as this. With its long corridors, numerous chambers, strange balconies, its church, shop, great yards and outbuildings, it forms a veritable town in itself. That old hacienda has witnessed many scenes of war and tumult during the nineteenth century, and who can say how many it had previously survived?

The four Amor brothers were educated in England, and Victor Amor, who looked a typical specimen of an English sportsman, rode over to the caves the day previously to meet and escort us to his home. We must have numbered nearly sixty as we wended our way across those mountains in the early hours of morning.

An hour's ride from St. Gabriel we espied horsemen on the horizon. They consisted of Joaquin Amor—the elder

brother—and his attendants, such as the doctor and heads of the different departments of sugar, distillery, or rice, all dressed in spotless white. Señor Amor had a black band on his arm in recognition of England's loss of her Queen. They were riding four abreast as they advanced—fourteen in number—to bid us welcome. It was quite impressive; all those sombreros coming off at once, the kindly words of hospitality spoken in truly Mexican style, and then the fourteen wheeled round, and we all proceeded together, according to the custom of the country, towards the hacienda. Although many of the courteous old customs have died out, some yet remain, and this act of chivalry was one of them. The host is supposed to meet his guests at his boundary, and there welcome them to his possessions.

What an army we made! All those smart, clean white uniforms from San Gabriel, our guard of Rurales in grey, with silver buttons and braid, their red ties and cummerbunds. Pistols, swords, guns on every side, the large hats and wondrous saddles. About seventy mounted people, and only two women among them!

As this hacienda of St. Gabriel was typical of a high-class country house, I must give a few details of its workings.

The village, containing nearly three thousand souls, belongs to the hacienda. The people pay no rent, and the owners of the hacienda hold the right to turn them out. The peasants are lent the ground on which they build their own houses—such as they are—merely bamboo walls roofed with a palm leaf sort of thatch. They are all obliged to work for the hacienda, in truly feudal style, whenever called upon to do so. Each man as a rule has an allotted number of days on which he is bound to render service. Generally about one thousand people—or one-third of the entire population of the village—are constantly employed; but the women in Mexico never work away from their

homes, though in busy seasons children, and even old men, are pressed into service to cut the sugar-cane.

There is no church in the village, that—like everything else—belongs to the hacienda, and is attached to the house. These churches are extremely quaint, and have steeples and domes. Some of such private places of worship are quite beautiful and contain rare treasures that have been in the family for generations. There is a private entrance to the sacred edifice from the house, leading into a gallery used by the owners. The priest comes from the next village to celebrate Mass on Sundays, holidays and “days of obligation,” when all the villagers attend the various masses, for the church could not hold 3,000 at once, although it certainly accommodates 700 or 800, there being no seats.

The proprietors of the hacienda pay the priest and the doctor, but the latter receives a little extra for attendance from outside. Practically, however, the landowner has to look after the spiritual and bodily needs of his people. He is, in fact, a small king with many responsibilities, which he usually manages to fulfil to everyone's satisfaction. Each hacienda is obliged to keep its shop, and there all the purchases of the villagers are made, the owner of the hacienda taking the profit or risk of loss. Everything is supplied to the workers from this one shop, bread, candles, hats, clothes, sandals, matches, blankets, lamp-oil, etc., etc. As a rule all the employés on the hacienda are paid in cash each Saturday night, and a little on account every Wednesday; no bills are allowed at the store, which is conducted on ready-money principles. In the olden days, and unfortunately still at some haciendas, the *peons* are not paid in money at all, but have to take out their wages in goods from the store, a bad principle, which renders the people little more than slaves. A man and his family live on six or eight cents a day (a cent is about a farthing), and men earn fifty cents per week on an average

at a hacienda ; this is quite sufficient ; they sit rent free, they have no fires to pay for, little clothing is required, and if so minded they can get pulque or aguardiente for a couple of cents. But, alas ! it allows no margin to save ; not that they would save if they had it, they would only drink away the extra money, for they have not yet learnt thrif.

If a man become too excited from stimulants he is put in gaol until somewhat sobered. If he have fought, stolen or committed murder, all matters which sometimes occur, the owner of the hacienda has to advise the authorities. He cannot keep a peon in confinement for more than forty-eight hours, by the end of which time the culprit must be handed over to higher authority. Prisoners are removed by the ranchero's own police—Ventena—of whom there are several on every hacienda. Their hands are just tied with ropes behind their backs, and off they are marched between men who look exactly like themselves, excepting that they are heavily armed.

It was very picturesque, that large yard, with the mules and carts and peons flitting about. Many women and children who had come from their homes to make purchases at the store added interest to the scene, as they lingered about before walking back to the village with their male relatives.

These haciendas resemble monasteries in more ways than one ; they are far away from the outside world, they have to do everything for themselves—as did the monks of yore—so at quiet seasons they make their own carts, even the wheels ! They employ regular carpenters, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, bricklayers and masons all the year round. Everyone is paid by the day, and the books are most intricate. An hacienda of this kind is quite a colony, and requires a clever head to manage.

In the evening about sundown all the hands come up from the fields and pass before the book-keeper, who sits behind a large table on the balcony at the bottom of the

house stairs, and as he calls out the names each man answers in his turn. It naturally takes some time to register one thousand or more names. I sat on a weighing-machine for a long time watching those hundreds of men and boys pass the book-keeper. They were all respectful and nice, standing hat in hand and bowing civilly as they passed the office desk. At the moment an extra seven hundred men and boys, making a total of 1,700 persons, were employed daily cutting sugar as it was harvest-time. There are numerous sugar haciendas scattered over Mexico; the people are tremendously fond of sweet things and are always eating *dulces*. The exports of sugar are only about £4,000 annually, but of course no sugar is imported. With the new plant being put up everywhere, it is likely the export will increase at a considerable rate.

In the house itself a number of servants are employed; there is always one, and sometimes there are two servants allotted to each member of the family. Then again one woman is constantly employed making tortillas for the kitchen and the clerks, and she is literally engaged all day in grinding her Indian corn and patting out her cakes.

In the servants' bedrooms there are often altars, and the sacred erections put up at Christmas are not taken down until the 2nd of February. Each room had its altar at San Gabriel, with its little crêche, moss, candles, and small hanging lamp.

Hacienda life resembles that of England in the time of the Barons, when feudal laws reigned and hotels were unknown. For instance, in days before the introduction of trains into Mexico, anyone could call and ask for admittance at an hacienda, which was then literally an open house, as to a certain extent it remains to-day. The stranger who craved a night's food and lodging sat at the bottom of the table, and perhaps never spoke a word; he would eat, go off to bed, rise, and depart early next morning! In the past

he would sometimes even ask the loan of a horse. At one time it was not at all unusual for a dozen strangers to claim lodging in one night, and no one was ever refused. Hotels do not exist even to-day, villages lie far apart, the roads are merely mountain tracks, so naturally shelter has still sometimes to be asked for and given at country houses.

A certain amount of land in each village is held by Government, which the Indians have the right to buy ; all Government property is claimable, and if anyone thinks fit and can pay the price wanted he can purchase it. Besides this, the owner of the hacienda generally lets out extra plots of land for farming, the men holding the same being known as arrendetario, or renters. The peons sow corn in the rainy season, and pay their rent in kind according to the acreage, viz., five cargoes of corn for every 24 cuartillos they put in the ground, which covers about 250 acres. The peon must deliver his corn at the hacienda or railway ; 15,000 to 20,000 dollars is often made yearly by the proprietor of the hacienda by this means without any worry or expense. He sells the corn in Mexico City.

The term *peon* really means a *footman*, one without a trade who works for wages by the day. *Caballero* means a *horseman*, and a *gañan* is a worker for wages in agriculture.

At the Amors' hacienda I was amazed to find a regular racing stable ; their English bringing-up had made them love sport. They have built good stables, where they breed polo ponies, trotters, and racing thoroughbreds. Everything is up-to-date ; the animals' names are painted above their boxes, and the place is well kept. The Amors are devoted to their animals, and when we went into the yard out popped various horses' heads over the low doors of their boxes. They knew their masters' voices, and came up to bid them welcome and receive a friendly rub on the nose. It seemed strange to find this love of sport in the

wild mountains of Southern Mexico, another of the endless surprises in store for the traveller.

It is a curious fact that in the many haciendas at which I was lucky enough to stay the meals were invariably served on a wide balcony. There were no windows, only a carved stone balustrade and massive stone arches. On the balustrade stood vases of plants and palms in tubs everywhere; all very picturesque and nice in the middle of the day, but early breakfast before the sun had risen was apt to strike somewhat chilly, while often by eight o'clock—supper time—it grew quite cold. Then again it is common to have no glass windows, even in the bedrooms in the south, just wire netting to keep out mosquitoes, and wooden shutters for night use. Certainly to a European or American mind the houses of Mexico are chilly and strangely arranged.

The living rooms are always upstairs, for the entire ground floor of an hacienda is given up to clerks' offices, store rooms, for the making of sugar, the shelling of rice or corn, or the packing of coffee, according to the district. Sometimes there are two storeys of these vaults, which are inhabited chiefly by bats, who seem to appreciate the darkness. These cloister cellars were originally made in this manner because four or five hundred years ago it was supposed that light affected sugar; now it is known it was not light but the air.

Nothing more weird or wildly romantic and picturesque could possibly be found than some of the old Spanish haciendas of Mexico, and yet, in spite of their antiquity, electric light and modern machinery are creeping in on every side. Men had been shot, fights had taken place, elopements occurred in this dear historical old place belonging to the Amors, with its flat roofs and queer chambers. The San Gabriel hacienda was connected with an important event, too, in the life of the Governor of the State of Morelos, in whose charge I was travelling. It was this:—

In the year 1875, during the political war, Diaz got up a evolution against the President, Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada. Morelos was one of Diaz' great strongholds. Alarcón was a captain then, fighting for the Government, and therefore opposed to Diaz. The insurgents could hide themselves in the mountains and oppose the Government troops, but they tried to avoid a regular fight with trained forces.

Alarcón, then on the side of the Government, routed Diaz' men and took twenty prisoners and forty horses. When he arrived at Cacahuimilpa he found that the Indians had caught two men whom they presented to him with pride, whereupon he told the prisoners to join the others on foot. One of them replied :

“I presume you do not know to whom you are talking. I am General Molina, one of General Diaz' most reliable friends and generals, and have been sent down by him to command his troops.”

As soon as Alarcón heard this he drew up, wishing to show all respect to an enemy of such high rank, and at once lent him a horse, and rode with him to the hacienda of San Gabriel—along the road we had traversed from Cacahuimilpa—where Colonel Ugalde was stationed with his regiment. The hacienda at that time belonged to the father of the present Amors, who were then boys at school in England. Alejandro Oliveros was the manager, and his son, Ramon—also educated in England—travelled through Morelos with us, and kindly acted as my interpreter when necessity arose.

Colonel Ugalde was angry with young Alarcón for not shooting General Molina on the spot, and therefore ordered the captain to be confined as a prisoner. So in this very hacienda where he was now an honoured guest, Señor Alarcón had once been a captive.

All that night Señor Alejandro Oliveros tried to



Organ-cactus hedge.



Aztec Indian.

persuade Colonel Ugalde not to shoot General Molina ; but all to no avail.

General Molina, a charming man, was told that he would be shot next day ; he asked for paper, pen and ink, and spent all the night writing to his wife ; towards morning he went to bed, and when called was sleeping quietly. He had been fighting for weeks, and was travel-stained and dirty, therefore after a bath he borrowed clean clothes from Señor Oliveros, and requested that his boots might be polished ! He then came across to the dining-room—that same great balcony where we had our meals—calmly ate his breakfast, and when satisfied sent word to say he was ready. It had rained all through the night, the quadrangle was muddy, and Ramon Oliveros remembers being much impressed as a boy, by seeing General Molina picking his way across the courtyard in order to keep his newly-polished boots clean while he walked along coolly to his death. After passing the gate at the far end, he turned and said :

“ This spot will do.”

Whereupon he made a little speech to the soldiers, saying he had been fighting for his cause, and was cheerfully dying for that cause ; he begged them to be brave, to uphold valour and honour before all, and then calmly asked them “ to shoot at his head ! ”

Pluck is a well-developed characteristic of the Mexicans.

Alarcón was locked up at San Gabriel until all was over, then he was liberated. When that revolution was suppressed, poor young Alarcón had a bad time. The then Governor of Morelos sent for him and appealed to him to help in subduing this obstreperous State for Diaz. It was a tough business ; but Alarcón, who had originally been opposed to Diaz, had now realised the worth of the man, and determined to serve him loyally. He succeeded in getting rid of most of the brigands. In his many engage-

ments with them, the Colonel was never wounded, though all told me he had performed some daring feats, and one had but to look at, or talk to, the man to believe the statement.

When Diaz was safely in power, he gave orders that the ringleaders of rebellion were to be shot, as then it would be comparatively easy to subdue the others. He rose to be President of Mexico at a time when nothing but the most stringent measures were of any avail. Colonel Alarcón became one of his most valued allies, and as Diaz who ruled with a rod of iron now leads the country with a wave of his hand, so Alarcón who shot down revolutionists relentlessly, is now governor of the self-same State through which he rode with me, while everywhere love and respect greeted him.

Formerly, men were shot on the slightest provocation, and troubles quelled ; men are still shot to-day—not so frequently of course, but still they are shot if they have offended against law and order. Trial is not necessary. If a man who is caught be known as a dangerous character or an inciter of disturbance, he is taken outside the town by a band of soldiers or rurales, and "allowed to escape." There is a law in Mexico called *Ley fuga* which allows any man running away from justice to be shot—a simple method which saves much trouble!

Colonel Alarcón always impressed me with his determination and pluck, yet withal he was so gentle, so considerate and anxious that Señorita Flores and I should not be over-tired ; he seemed to have both the manly, soldierly side to his character, together with the gentle and womanly one. He appears to have borne a charmed life ; on one occasion his horse actually bolted with him right into a hundred or more of his enemy, and he rode untouched through their midst and out again ! Yet he is so modest, he never told me one word himself of his many plucky deeds, and laughed them off as nothing. He is a

charming man, and no one can wonder he and President Diaz are such friends.

The worst of going to nice places and meeting charming people, is that they have to be left all too soon. For my part I was quite sorry to turn my back on San Gabriel with its greyhounds and fox-terriers, its stud and farm, its up-to-date appliances, and delightfully quaint old picturesqueness, in order to jog on again, partly by train from Puente de Ixtla—for we had joined another line after our journey through the mountains—and then on horseback to the Governor's own hacienda at Temilpa, near Cuautla, from which the band had come that played in those grand caves. There are some marvellous springs here; they are not hot, only tepid, yet the pools are continually bubbling up owing to volcanic action. One is composed of mud and sand, and it is strange to watch the sand being hustled round and round in this regular whirlpool. I had never seen anything like them except in rugged Iceland. They resembled water in a saucepan boiling on the fire, but the saucepan was sixty yards in circumference, and every now and then the heated liquid shot on high. These springs, of which the water is clearest green, are surrounded by all kinds of tropical vegetation, the pools themselves being closed in by the most magnificent arum lilies.

From here we rode through a banana grove, the splendid leaves forming delightful shade as we trotted beneath them through the coffee with its scarlet berries. There are so many kinds of bananas and plantains that it is quite impossible to describe them in detail, but as a rule they only live eighteen months, bear their fruit—which is always picked green—and then die. Some of the plantains in the groves grow twenty or thirty feet high; others are much shorter, but it is a handsome tree, and forms a pleasant shade. For the first time in my life I

then really enjoyed a banana, and that was because it tasted like an apple! It was one of a rare kind which does not carry well, and is therefore never exported, but it was quite delicious. One can pick an orange, a lemon or a lime, and eat it by the way in Mexico, but a banana is different. Much to my surprise, I learnt it must be cut and kept a fortnight even in that tropical land before it really ripens.

We lunched in an orange grove where Señora Alarcón—the Governor's handsome and charming wife—met us, and after the meal we borrowed the rifles of the Rurales and shot at bottles. Señora Alarcon broke a couple, the writer saved the credit of her country on this occasion by smashing one, and each of the men managed to shatter several.

We were all enjoying ourselves, everyone calling out "Viva Mexico," or "Viva Inglaterra," with reference to the nationality of the person whose good shot was being thus honoured, when Señora Alarcón and I moved away for a stroll. On our return I noticed the bottle was hanging on another tree, and bent forward to my hostess to say:—

"We must move, we might get a ricochet here." The word ricochet had hardly left my lips—my face being upturned—when speech seemed paralysed; I was shot! It was nothing serious, but the little bit of twisted lead had slid off the bottle and buried itself in my "Adam's apple," if the female descendants of Eve possess such an organ! A tiny red streak ran down my collar, and everyone seemed to think I must be dead, so great was the excitement. It was nothing, however, and in a few minutes I could speak again and was washed clean!

Frivolity enters into all our lives at times, and a little dancing under the orange trees completed our amusement on the day in question. Some of the Rurales joined us when we danced the Mexican national dance to the accompaniment of some fiddlers and mandoline players who

had come upon the scene, and so under the shade of orange trees laden with blossom and fruit, we enjoyed the delights of the Terpsichorean art. What a medley of humanity we were, too!

Colonel Alarcón's hacienda was famous chiefly for rice culture ; there the brown husks were being removed to show the white beans within. This was done by machinery ; and yet at the same farm the Indian corn was still taken from the cob by hand.

Rice is, of course, one of the staple foods of Mexico. Strangely enough it seldom or ever appears in the form of a pudding, but is served as a vegetable, and in the case of the poorer people often forms the entire meal. The chief rice-producing State is undoubtedly Morelos, where in 1898 the value of the crop was 685,000 dols.

We have all heard of paddy fields in India ; rice in Mexico is grown in somewhat the same manner. A great deal of water is necessary, which is all dammed up into little pools from four to eight feet in size. This is not a particularly healthy form of culture, and a mist or miasma containing the germs of fever, is continually rising, but then this is only in the rice fields themselves, and a hundred yards away all may be different.

What a happy week it had been, what a week of new experiences and novel sights. How splendidly it had been organised, nothing ever went wrong ; and yet it is no easy matter to move a body of some half hundred mounted people through a mountainous country, and feed and house them by the way, when everything has to be carried on pack mules, and every village has to know when the cavalcade is to be expected, so that its officials may be in readiness, its band tuned, its triumphal arches up, the flowers still fresh, its roadways lined with people, and branches of trees stuck in the ground to make the paths appear like boulevards.

Colonel Alarcón had done it all, and done it right royally, too. He was constantly making the most charming allusions to the pleasure it gave him to do anything for a lady, for a friend of President Diaz, for a daughter of that great country England, and—since he had known me—for the sake of the lady herself.

He has a charming house, and both he and his wife were so hospitable and friendly, I soon felt at home.

Our visit to Temilpa was all too short. One morning the train stopped, and into it Victor Amor, Adolfo Grimwood, and I stepped on our way back to Mexico City. Some of the party remained with the Alarcóns, others started to ride home again through the mountains. The Governor rode with us to the station, accompanied by his guard, and then galloped off to meet General Diaz, who was arriving further up the line in his special train. He had been ill, very ill, but not nearly so ill as the European and American papers had reported, and for nearly six weeks he remained the guest of Colonel Alarcón until his health was completely restored.

The Governor of Morelos was terribly distressed that he could not escort me to his frontier, but to meet the President of Mexico was of course his first duty.

At the frontier *Cuautla*, the Jefe Politico Agustin Munoz de Cote met us, and gave the luncheon Colonel Alarcón had ordered to be in readiness when the train stopped.

Only imagine a church and adjacent convent being turned into a railway station! Yet this has actually happened at Cuautla, situated on the border of the State of Morelos. In Iceland the church at Thingvalla was formerly used as a sleeping place for weary travellers, although during my visit to that interesting spot we were lodged in the priest's house. Churches have been put to strange uses, as stables or barracks in times of war; but in days of peace it seems

odd to select a place of worship as a suitable building for a railway station. A pretty church, too, for Mexico is justly famous for the number and beauty of her religious edifices.

The tower with its bells remains; in fact the Church remains, but it has been adapted to ticket offices and other uses. Cuautla is a sweet place; in the garden where we lunched with the distinguished-looking sheriff was a profusion of flowers. We were not a hundred miles south of the city of Mexico, yet the climate was tropical.

It was wonderful—from first to last those eight days' ride through the State of Morelos appear more like a dream than reality.

A delightful little pamphlet written in Spanish has been printed, giving an account of that trip through Morelos. It is too long to give in full, but one or two short extracts are appended. It only came into my hands long after this chapter was written, and yet shows the Spanish man and English woman received much the same impressions:—

VISIT TO THE STATE OF MORELOS,

BY

THE DISTINGUISHED WRITER, MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE.

The progress of our country is assuredly only furthered by the visits of distinguished writers, who on returning to their own countries will forward the current of emigration to Mexico by the accounts of their impressions as they lay them before their readers. There is therefore nothing strange in the fact that our Government should receive with open arms authors of real eminence who come here perchance bearing a bagful of prejudices against us, and who on leaving must take away the fondest recollections of our country, and intend, let us hope, to contradict some of those false impressions from which we have suffered so much in the past.

Our State has been honoured by a visit from the distinguished writer, Mrs. Alec Tweedie, that indefatigable authoress, who adds to her exceptional energy real literary talent and a vast amount of solid common sense. She came preceded by well-deserved fame, which has certainly been fully justified, and bore with her the highest recommendations from the President of the Republic and other distinguished folk residing in Mexico. She was accompanied by Señor Alarcón, whose gallantry and *savoir faire* are proverbial, and we believe that he will cherish a most delightful recollection of his journey. We purpose to relate as summarily as possible the excursion of the Senora Tweedie, in which we had the pleasure of taking part.

* * * * *

At the little village of San Antonio, Señora Tweedie and the Governor, Señor Alarcón, were received with simplicity, but with many significant proofs of affection. In the middle of the only and picturesque street of the town the inhabitants had built floral arches with kindly inscriptions. They presented the Señora with bouquets of flowers and pieces of pottery to remind her of her visit to their pueblo.

On passing through the village of Nochitepec a band of the pupils of the schools was waiting to salute the Señora.

* * * * *

A most agreeable surprise awaited us at the village of Alpuyeca, where we arrived about eleven o'clock. The principal street of the village had been beautifully decorated with floral arches, hanging festoons and flags, and a special arch erected in front of the municipal buildings bore a kindly inscription in English, namely, "Welcome to the Illustrious Visitor."

The Mansion itself was beautifully decorated with quantities of beautiful palms, flowers and flags. In the middle of the street were placed the pupils of the schools carrying banners, and the inhabitants of the town had come out to salute Mrs. Alec Tweedie. The village band was playing the whole time. Beside the large arch which we have described a platform had been erected, on which stood an allegorical group, representing the independence of Mexico, and formed by three little girls. The Señora Tweedie showed her profound gratitude to the people for their cordial manifestations.

Without any mishap we reached Xochicalco, where we were received by the principal chief of the district, accompanied by the Mayors of the villages of Tetlama and Nochitepec. In front of the ruins a beautiful floral bower had been erected, over which were placed the united flags of Mexico and England, and an inscription in English:—"To Mrs. Alec Tweedie. Welcome. January 22nd, 1901."

After the party had partaken of an excellent luncheon, one of the Indians from Tetlama asked leave of the Señora to address a few words to her in Aztec idiom, which she readily granted.

* * * * *

The following day (25th) we went by train to Temilpa, and got out of the train quite close to a famous ruin, where twelve horses for the party were awaiting us. From here we rode through two banana groves to the springs which give birth to the Green River (Rio Verde). The sight was really most picturesque which was afforded to us by all those extraordinary bubbling springs, which are situated in most luxuriant surroundings. The exuberant vegetation, the truly tropical splendour, evoked admiration from one and all, as the *Borbollones* poured forth the enormous quantity of twelve cubic metres of water per second. The whole volume of water presents an appearance of a volcano in a state of eruption, and the water is thrown to a height of ten feet.

After admiring the tropical beauty of these wonderful springs we rode on to an orange grove, where we were met by Señora de Alarcón, who had come from the Governor's hacienda at Temilpa, a few miles distant, bringing with her a most magnificent luncheon. After luncheon the different members of the party amused themselves in various ways, and finally Mrs. Tweedie and Madame Alarcón, borrowing the soldiers' firearms, proceeded to shoot at bottles which were suspended from the branches of the trees. Señora Alarcón is an excellent shot, and both she and our English guest succeeded in hitting the target and breaking their bottles.

At five in the afternoon we went to the Governor's residence, and remained there for a couple of days; it is situated about four miles from the orange grove.

Here, unfortunately, our delightful trip came to an end, but not before the Governor had made Mrs. Tweedie a very charming little speech. He said:—

"It is with infinite regret, Madame, that we have come to the termination of your little excursion through my State. We one and all retain the most vivid and agreeable impressions of the charm and amiability of our guest. Whether riding or driving, comfortable or uncomfortable, she has invariably been cheerful under all circumstances. Her energy is indefatigable, and her talent and versatility surprising." He concluded his flattering remarks by saying:—

"You brought with you, Madame, a recommendation that to me is of the highest value, that of the President of the Republic, but believe me, Señora, that without any such recommendation you yourself, by your own merit, would gain the good care of all here, and be granted every privilege that you could wish for. The Señora Tweedie has left to all of us who know her the most pleasant and indelible recollections. May God guide her through all paths, and may He grant that her impressions of Mexico may be as favourable as are those which she has created in our minds."

* * * * *

We conclude by addressing to Colonel Alarcón our utmost thanks for having afforded us the pleasure of such an agreeable excursion. The arrangement and management of everything were beyond praise; we had not one single difficulty during the whole journey. Everywhere we went we found arrangements had been made for our reception, and for everybody's comfort. Had it not been for such splendid management, the trip would have been extremely difficult, in fact, in some cases, almost impossible; and this excursion gives one additional proof—if it were needed—of the powers of organisation possessed by the Governor of Morelos, and of the great affection in which he is held by his subordinates, all of whom most zealously carried out his most minute instructions.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN INTERESTING TRIP TO OAXACA.

EVERYONE who goes to Mexico should visit the wonderful Mayas-Zapotec ruins of Mitla. Mexico possesses the strangest, most romantic, most cruel of records. Mayas, Toltec, Aztec and Zapotec ruins still remain after one or four thousand years, perhaps more, who knows? and are dotted over the country to cause doubt and speculation, and mystify historian and archaeologist alike.

The ruins of Mitla are probably Zapotec, but no one has yet been able to decide the question; in any case, they are totally unlike the fortress of Xochicalco, which is supposed to be of Aztec origin.

A narrow gauge railway runs to Oaxaca, a day and night's journey from the City, and a few hours before reaching the town with this strange name—one realises the marvellous engineering skill that managed to get even a narrow gauge line up that tremendous grade, where there is not a single kilometre without its curves, and where for sixty miles, while passing through the Cañon de Tomellin, one sits amazed at the magnificence of the surroundings. The Cañon de Guerrero, on the road to Tampico, is beautiful with its verdure, great tropical trees, cocoanuts and bamboos, creepers and palms, its parrots and its monkeys; but de Tomellin is quite different, wildly grand, with hills and precipices of volcanic rock. There is practically no vegetation in places, but the red, yellow, brown



Cholula Pyramid.



Big tree of Tule, 154 feet round the trunk at 6 feet from the ground ; a native says,
"It takes two looks to see the top."

grey or white of those volcanic masses is so twisted and twirled that they look as though they had been swirled round and round in a boiling cauldron, and the sight of them makes the trip magnificent. Perhaps this may be considered the *grandest* line in Mexico, for it is just one splendid wild picture after another.

Mr. W. Morcom, of the Mexican Southern Railway, kindly sent his private car up to Mexico City to fetch me, and Mrs. C. R. Hudson was my companion.

We enjoyed Puebla, with its lovely Cathedral, its wonderful chapel of Santo Domingo, where the carving is undoubtedly another of the best specimens in Mexico—and when one says "Mexico" one means in the world, for in the matter of churches, carvings, and gildings, Mexico contains exquisite workmanship. Much was destroyed in the days of warfare and revolution, but fortunately much still remains. The Domingo churches are generally the finest of all, which is again proved in Oaxaca; that sect of monks seems to have been particularly artistic as well as rich.

In Puebla a handsome Municipal Palace has just been erected, and the architect is an Englishman, Mr. Charles Hall, a former student of the Royal Academy, London. How Britons do penetrate to the farthest corners of the earth!

In small towns like Puebla, Oaxaca or Cuernavaca, it is not the fashion for ladies to wear hats. The girls have no head covering, and when they go out in the sun—which is seldom—they merely use a parasol. To avoid sunburn they powder tremendously—quite a white powder, which contrasts strangely with their dark skins. The elder ladies wear lace mantillas, or thin black scarves, over their hair. These, though charming—especially the former—afford no protection whatever from the sun! It seems strange that the men—including gentlemen—should all wear the enormous hat of the country, while the women go unshielded.

The poorer women never wear a hat; they just put

their blue shawls (rebozo) over their heads, and walk about at the hottest time of the day with no further protection from the sun. Needless to say, they have no parasols!

The people seem to be divided into two classes, those who dread the sun and those who do not. Those who do, drive about in closed carriages, while their coachmen carry sun-shades! Sunstroke in Mexico is almost unknown, except among foreigners.

Puebla is one of the twenty-seven States of Mexico, and its chief town has the same name. Eleven times have armies assembled before the gates of Puebla. Eleven times in the strange history of Mexico has Puebla played her part; but now all is quiet. There are two or three dozen factories, saw-mills, and foundries. The public squares are full of monuments, and the streets clean and well-kept. The town stands 7,000 feet above the sea level, after the usual Mexican fashion. Mexico had no consideration for weak hearts when it planned its cities!

Of course we went to see the famous Aztec pyramid of Cholula, where the Spaniards met the former in deadly combat. A drive of seven or eight miles in a tram-car drawn by galloping mules brought us to the spot. Men were ploughing with funny old wooden implements drawn by oxen, and churches were to be seen on every side.

The pyramid of Cholula is thus described by Prescott in his "Conquest of Mexico":—

"Cholula was to Mexico what Mecca is to Mahomedans, or Jerusalem to Christians. It was the Holy City of Anahuac.

"It was in honour of Quetzalcoatl, the benevolent deity, that the stupendous mound was erected on which the traveller still gazes with admiration as the most colossal fabric in New Spain, rivalling in dimensions, and somewhat resembling in form, the pyramidal structures of ancient Egypt. The date of its erection is unknown. It seems not improbable that it is an artificial composition of stone and earth, deeply incrusted, as is certain, in every part, with alternate strata of brick and clay.

"The perpendicular height of the pyramid is one hundred and seventy-seven feet. Its base is one thousand four hundred and twenty-three feet long, twice as long as that of the great pyramid of Cheops. It may give some idea of its dimensions to state that its base, which is square, covers about forty-four acres, and the platform on its truncated

summit embraces more than one. It reminds us of those colossal monuments of brick-work which are still seen in ruins on the banks of the Euphrates, and, in much higher preservation, on those of the Nile. Several of the pyramids of Egypt, and the ruins of Babylon, are, as is well known, of brick. An inscription on one of the former, indeed, celebrates this material as superior to stone. Humboldt furnishes an apt illustration of the size of the Mexican *teocalli* by comparing it to a mass of bricks covering a square four times as large as the Place Vendome, and of twice the height of the Louvre.

"On the summit stood a sumptuous temple, in which was the image of the mystic deity, 'god of the air,' with ebon features, unlike the fair complexion which he bore upon earth, wearing a mitre on his head waving with *plumes of fire*, with a resplendent collar of gold round his neck, pendants of mosaic turquoise in his ears, a jewelled sceptre in one hand, and a shield curiously painted, the emblem of his rule over the winds, in the other. The sanctity of the place, hallowed by hoary tradition, and the magnificence of the temple and its services, made it an object of veneration throughout the land, and pilgrims from the furthest corners of Anahuac came to offer up their devotions at the shrine of Quetzacoatl. The number of these was so great as to give an air of mendicity to the motley population of the city ; and Cortés, struck with the novelty, tells us that he saw multitudes of beggars, such as are to be found in the enlightened capitals of Europe ; a whimsical criterion of civilisation which must place our own prosperous land somewhat low in the scale.

"Cholula was not the resort only of the indigent devotee."

Cholula is still a place of pilgrimage.

It hardly looks like a pyramid, so thick is the vegetation, so tall are the trees ; on one side is a wide stairway, or now and then a gentle slant, up which the pilgrims toil, often on their knees ! We felt quite like pilgrims ourselves, so hot was the sun and so great the ascent. At the summit was a church, not a particularly beautiful place of worship by any means, but commanding such a panorama ! It is said that fifty-seven churches can be seen in the surrounding valleys, and indeed domes and spires seemed more numerous than ever. They are such beautiful tiled or gilded domes and such splendid towers, that really the churches of Mexico, even in the villages, excite astonishment.

Puebla was once famous for its tiles, and most of the best in Mexico were formerly made there, usually copied from the old Moorish ; but the art has died out, and although there is one man who undertakes to copy them, he fails to get that wonderful mellowness of colouring that one finds in the old glaze.

We had a terrible dust storm at Cholula, one of those

storms which turn one's hair white, and fill eyes, ears, nose and mouth with sand. It gave me a sore throat, and being afraid to start for southern wilds with tonsilitis, or anything of the sort, I went to a druggist to obtain a remedy. He spoke no language but Spanish. A few words and many gesticulations made him, however, understand I wanted a throat spray, and at last he produced one triumphantly. So far so good. Now I required iron or steel drops to use in it. Alas! English, French, and German failed; what was to be done? Suddenly like an inspiration the Latin word "ferrum" came into my mind.

"Ferrum?" I said in an interrogatory tone.

"Si, Señora, ferrum," replied the gentleman, and off he went and fetched the bottle.

It is wonderful what can be accomplished in a foreign land by signs and an occasional odd word. But one must not be shy!

After we left Puebla the journey by train became extremely interesting, and as we travelled farther south the vegetation grew more and more tropical. This was the third time I had entered tropical climes within a month, and to return again to the height of Mexico City seemed somewhat of a trial for any constitution!

It is a strange country; in the valley of this route rain never falls. From January to December rain is unknown; but there is mist or rain in the hills, whereby the land is irrigated. The result is that whenever people feel inclined, they sow a crop, and are able to reap it a few weeks later, regardless of the season, and when they wish to sow another they just do so. Three crops a year are quite a common occurrence, so bountiful is Nature in this part of the world!

Surprises never end in Mexico. About luncheon-time our train drew up at the station of Tomellin, and I was just stepping out of the car when a gentleman came forward

and asked if I were "Señora Seed?" I bowed assent, having learnt that there was no *w* in Spanish, for which reason Tweedie proved totally unpronounceable to an ordinary Mexican.

He promptly began a long speech, in which I caught the words *Jefe Politico, Gobernador, Comida* (Sheriff, Governor, Luncheon). In my best Spanish I thanked him, not daring to say we had just lunched in the private car, on the good fare provided by Mr. Morcom, and taking his arm, was marched off amid many kindly words of welcome to a second meal. He was the *Jefe Politico* of the district of Cuicatlan Torres Altaminano. Almost immediately another man came along the platform and enquired in English if I were Mrs. Alec Tweedie.

"I have come with the Chief Justice of the State on behalf of the Governor, General Gonzales, who is away, to bid you welcome," said the new-comer.

It turned out that President Diaz, with his customary forethought, had telegraphed the news of my probable arrival, and this young Englishman—whose father, Constantine Rickards, had lived in Mexico for fifty years—had been sent with the Chief Justice, Señor Lic Magro, a journey of five hours by rail—imagine! five hours by rail in the tropics!—to meet and escort me to the capital of the State! They brought the following letter:—

Correspondencia Particular
del
GOBERNADOR DEL ESTADO.

Señora ELEN TWEEDIE, Tomellin.
Muy respetable Sra.:

El suscrito Gobernador del Estado por la presente tiene la honra de presentar á Ud. á los Srs. Licenciado Francisco Magro y Federico Rickards comisionados para que en su representación se sirvan ofrecerle sus respetos y acompañarla hasta su alojamiento en esta Ciudad.

El mismo queda de Ud. afmo. y S.S.

NICOLAS LOPEZ,
Garrido.

We all went off to the luncheon prepared, and Mrs. Hudson and I enjoyed iced lemon squashes, and played with food to keep the others company.

Here in the cañon, miles from anywhere and everywhere—so to speak—was a luncheon fit for a king. The little shanty was kept by a Chinaman, a first-class caterer and cook ; as said before, surprises never end in Mexico. The mere fact that it should pay this enterprising caterer seemed extraordinary ; but of course he had all the passengers from the daily up and down trains, and being on the line could easily get supplies of food when necessary ; but the result was so wonderful, it would have done credit to many a large railway station, where the fare is often equally surprising in its awfulness !

What a journey it was up the cañon from Tomellin to Oaxaca ! What glorious rocks, what deep ravines and mountain torrents, everything wild and grand ! Our little engine puffed and panted as we rose higher and higher. For sixty miles we swung round corners more or less on four per cent. grades, so the effect may be imagined ! Just one grand picture after another, but it was terribly hot.

The train was stopped on two occasions for me to take photographs ; out I jumped with the conductor, while heads were popped from every window to see what had happened. Alas, the photographs were a failure—some of the few failures of Mexico. The tropical damp of the cañon made the films hazy and indistinct, as happened later at Tehuantepec. The ravine is so shut in, in places, it was exactly like a Turkish bath.

The two officials from the Governor returned with us on the five hours' journey to Oaxaca, which they had left at five o'clock that morning. They proved delightful companions, although the Chief Justice only spoke Spanish.

The pass became grander and grander ; the mountains rose five thousand feet straight up from the railway track.

One strange thing we noticed ; after following a stream the waters of which were flowing to the south, suddenly the train passed through a cutting, and the river was flowing to the north !

When our train drew up at Oaxaca, it was nearly dark (7.30 p.m.), but there, standing on the platform were a number of "new friends" to welcome us. The Governor of the State, and some of his officials, and also the oldest English resident in Oaxaca, namely, Constantine Rickards, senior, the father of one of our escort.

In front of us was a line of soldiers, and behind them stood a couple of artillery waggons. I ventured to remark upon this latter fact, and received the amazing reply :

"They are here for your luggage."

This was sad, for we had no luggage, at least none to speak of ; but they managed to spread the little out somehow, and half an hour later six soldiers in uniform solemnly marched into the hotel, bearing two small cases, and two sombrero hats ! They deposited our "luggage" with great ceremony, and after saluting, departed.

Carriages were waiting at the station, and arm in arm with the Governor of the State, I marched across the platform, and took my seat behind the driver. It is really interesting to witness the amount of fatigue a Mexican gentleman will go through when placing a lady in the seat of honour. It is a matter of courtesy about which he is most particular.

When our carriage drew up at the hotel, we found another battalion of soldiers before the door. As we halted, they struck up the national air of Mexico. This Oaxaca band was certainly the best I heard in the Republic ; it played splendidly. Thirty-eight performers serenaded us that evening until I stepped on to the balcony of the caged-in window and called the band-

master to thank him for his excellent music, and to tell him we were ready to go to bed. Otherwise, I verily believe these serenades would go on all night, for the people love music dearly. Hundreds of Indians were lolling in the street, or lying on the pavement, enjoying this open-air concert.

A suite of rooms, including a dining and drawing room, had been secured, and in them we found exquisite bouquets of roses, each bearing a card of welcome from the Governor of the State of Oaxaca, or some English or American resident. It all seemed quite home-like, and everyone was so kind that for a moment I almost forgot that mighty oceans divided me from my dear old London surroundings.

The Governor had ordered supper, which, alas ! we could not enjoy, as we and our escorts had dined in the private car ; but on going into the dining-room to get some soda water, I was amazed to find two large baskets of champagne and all sorts of good vintages had been sent up from the Municipal Palace for our use ! They certainly do things royally in Mexico, but almost teetotal habits did not cause much shrinkage in the basket-cellars.

The son of an Englishman is Archbishop of Oaxaca ! Strange but true ; and Archbishop Gillow is a most delightful person. Oaxaca is really to be congratulated on having such a high priest, for he is a gentleman and a scholar, a student of art, and just the man to restore the Cathedral and the Santo Domingo church, both of which he seems to be doing well.

The Archbishop's full title is *Ilustrísimo Señor Doctor Don Eulogio G. Gillow, Arzobispo de Oaxaca.*

I was admiring a full-length portrait of the prelate in a sort of cardinal's red robe, when he explained the dress in question had nothing to do with a cardinal, but was a Capa Magna which he holds as a councillor of the King of

Spain! He sent for the dress, which is really lovely. A white closely-pleated shirt has a lace flounce of the finest point, about twelve inches deep. Over this is worn the Capa Magna, made of the most gorgeous red cardinal silk, with a train about six yards long, or a yard and a half longer than those worn by ladies at the Court of St. James'. The hood is lined and ornamented with white satin, and gorgeous jewels add to the effect. Six or seven times a year—that is to say, at the great festivals—Archbishop Gillow wears his Capa, and as he walks in the church procession with his train bearers, the effect must be magnificent, for he has a fine head and bearing, worthy of the robe. He informed me with pride he had not long been back from the Paris Exhibition.

"I attended the first exhibition in 1851," he said, "and have been to every one that has been held since. I find them an education in every way. But I love Mexico, especially the southern country. By-the-bye, have you ever seen an antiburro?"

"No; what is it?"

"A rare animal, still found in parts, half donkey and half bull. There are some on my country property even now."

There are wonderful jewels and sacramental cups in Oaxaca, as in so many other towns; but that is not surprising when one remembers the wealth of the Mexican Church until Juarez overthrew the Roman Catholic power.

Archbishop Gillow showed us a strange old wooden Indian idol lately removed from one of the churches. He would not own that idols still are objects of worship in some of the out-of-the-way villages, and that the priests dare not remove them for fear of perilling their lives. After all, the idol of old was no more gruesome than are some of the figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary that Mexican Indians worship to-day.

The Indian is full of superstition, and although the Church does all it can to wipe this out, it cannot succeed. There are people in the mountains who are said to be gifted with second sight, and an Indian will walk for days in order to consult one of these oracles as to whether he ought to marry, buy a farm, or go a journey. A little removed from the main track one can find idols in the reed huts, idols that the people love, idols that have been in their families for generations, and before which they burn their votive offerings.

Of course a wax model wrapped in rags can be burnt, drowned, or broken, and the same dire calamity will happen to the person the effigy represents!

Nestizo (performers of witchcraft) are supposed to be able to do wondrous things to keep away the devil, and manuscript prayers and formulæ which act as charms can be purchased from them. Suppose a person to have been drowned. A basin or saucer, in which a lighted sacred candle has been placed, is started off on the stream, and is supposed to stop above the spot where the body lies hidden.

On one occasion we passed an idle man, and a friend called out to him something about *Chuparosa*.

“What did you say?” I enquired.

“I told him to get a humming-bird and put it in his belt (faja),” was the reply. “The Indians imagine if they carry one wrapped in bits of ribbon or wool it makes them industrious. Another idea is to carry the finger bone of a dead person for the same purpose.”

The best collection of idols in Mexico belongs to Dr. Fernando Sologüren at Oaxaca, whose young daughter is a direct descendant of Montezuma, on the mother’s side.

He is by profession a doctor of medicine, but his hobby is archaeology, and whenever he has a holiday he goes and digs. One or two things in his museum interested me most particularly. He has a number of jade ornaments and



Idols found near Mitla. Generally five in a tomb.



Chinese god found in a tomb, Huennetan State of Oaxaca.
The figure is in bronze, and sits two and a-half inches
high. Said to be 4,000 years old.

beads, and as no jade of the kind has ever been found in Mexico this again points to the fact that in former times Mexico and China were connected. Even more marvellous than this, however, is the fact that in an old tomb near Oaxaca he found a small bronze Chinese idol! This little personage is beautifully made; it is in a sitting posture, the figure about four inches high. The Doctor once showed it to a great Chinese antiquarian, who said that from the workmanship he should judge it to be over three thousand years old, and undoubtedly Chinese. Yet this figure was found buried in a Zapotec tomb at Oaxaca! How did it get there, unless, like its friend the jade, it had been brought over from China?

To me, as a casual visitor who only spent six months in the country, it seems that the influence of China and Egypt is noticeable again and again in the ancient Mexican ruins, carvings, and ornaments. One constantly finds vases of Egyptian form, and although, of course, I may be totally wrong, I cannot help thinking that these scattered islands of the West Indies and those scattered islands of Japan were once far more numerous than they are to-day, and that the people of Egypt and China had communication with Mexico by means of long chains of islands which enabled them to travel in their boats without covering too enormous an area of open sea, as the Icelanders did to Ireland and Norway in the open boats of the Vikings.

Dr. Sologüren told me that all the tombs round Oaxaca look towards the setting sun, emblematic of the setting life. As a rule, five figures of gods or idols are found in each tomb, generally in a squatting position, the same posture, in fact, in which the Indians still sit to-day, and the idols are usually about two feet high. They are not beautiful, indeed in many cases one might truthfully say they are hideous; but as the types vary very much, the Doctor thinks that they were meant to represent the person buried in the tomb.

There were vases in this most interesting collection which, when blown into, whistle quite prettily, and, judging by the shells and pots found which formerly had been utilised for whistling, that must have been a favourite amusement, as it is to-day. Most of the modern pottery has whistles attached. There were beautifully painted urns, arrow-heads, and wonderful Mixtec or Zapotec jewellery. The gold ear-rings struck me as remarkable ; they were four inches in circumference, and quite an inch wide at the narrowest part ; the two rims being identical in size. The flesh of the ear was bored through, and day by day larger instruments were forced into it until the hole was sufficiently big to admit these enormous ear-rings, like miniature cart-wheels, being pushed through.

A "prehistoric skull" was peculiarly interesting ; the bone was about three times the thickness of an ordinary skull, and if the man were made in proportion to the size of his head, he must have been nine or ten feet high. This private collection of Dr. Sologüren's ought to find its way to the British Museum. Will no rich man step forward and secure the prize and thus raise our Mexican collection from mediocrity to something worthy the traditions of the place ?

Concerning arrow-heads, it is a remarkable fact that in these out-of-the-way valleys of Mexico the Indians still make their own arrow-heads, and shoot with blow-pipes. A man will fashion his arrow-head in a few minutes—five at most—and with his long reed blow-pipe and stone head fixed to his arrow, shoot with no uncertain aim !

The State of Oaxaca is full of mines of gold, silver, and lead, indeed anything and everything belonging to the mineral world seems to be found there. The enterprises as a rule are not large, being for the most part small mining camps ; but they make an income and manage to get along. Doubtless as time goes on great developments will ensue and large companies be formed to work the wealth of those

mountains, but I hope not dishonest bogus companies, for there have been far too many sad stories of the latter in Mexico. The minerals are there without a doubt ; but it is of no use to form a company and collect enormous sums of money to work a mine, when the company only acquires a poor or a bad one, and puts the surplus money into the pockets of its own directors. I must say again here, at the risk of repetition, that it seems to me an extraordinary thing that Americans and Englishmen so often invest their money in this ridiculous way, without even taking the trouble to find out whether the project is a sound one, and then they are surprised and indignant when—as is too often the case—they burn their fingers !

The mines of Mexico contain fathomless possibilities, at least such is my impression after travelling a good deal and talking to all sorts and conditions of men in that country. But the roguery practised is, alas ! unfathomable also, and often proves disastrous to widows and orphans, who are dazzled by the golden glitter of promises, which are merely cleverly concocted falsehoods.

Mines at the best of times are doubtful investments, and it would appear that they are even more doubtful in Mexico than elsewhere, owing to the class of men who have got hold of some of them.

Oaxaca was the birth-place of General Diaz, and the history of his life is closely connected with that town. In fact, in 1858 he defended the city against General Cobos, and pursued him to Jalapa. A couple of years later Diaz, on his return from Tehuantepec, fought against this same enemy, and defeated him near the ruins of Mitla. Probably the greatest battle against the French under Marshal Bazaine was the siege of Oaxaca in 1865, when Diaz was again engaged in defending his own town. The siege lasted three weeks, by which time Diaz and his supporters were entirely destitute of food, stores, and ammunition.

They succeeded in making the church bells into cannon balls, but they could not make stones into bread. It is related that General Diaz stood on one of the towers of the old Convent of San Francisco, discharging a howitzer, until his position became so perilous that he was positively dragged away by his own officers. This did not prevent his being made prisoner and taken to Puebla, whence he escaped. He then marched against the Imperialists, and this time was the besieger, where little more than a year previously he had been the besieged. In November, 1866, he made a triumphal entry into his native town, marched on to Puebla, and finally the City of Mexico. So delighted were the people of Oaxaca with the daring of their citizen that after the French war they presented him with an hacienda as a free gift, where he lived for a couple of years in happiness with the wife he had married by proxy. Many changes followed. The General visited the United States, was afterwards proclaimed President of Mexico, and during the four years he retired before re-election, he returned to Oaxaca, where he was at once elected Governor, an office he continued to hold until again made President in 1880, a post he has held ever since. Busy as this great man is, no item of my visit to the State of Oaxaca was omitted from his carefully-arranged programme. Each day was carefully thought out and planned.

One night the Deputy-Governor, Nicolas Garrido, in the absence of General Gonzales, gave a dinner at the Municipal Palace. Now, the Municipal Palace in Oaxaca is a very grand building! At the door a guard of soldiers and Rurales was, of course, stationed; the carriages and horses were all in the patio, according to custom. Upstairs were the different suites of apartments, and turning along a wide corridor to the right we entered the chief salon, upholstered in yellow and brown brocade, with gorgeous mirrors here and there, and a considerable amount of gilding. There

was the inevitable sofa of honour, and there, in two direct lines facing one another were the rows of half-a-dozen chairs, as at Cuernavaca, on which the guests sit, forming three sides of a quadrangle.

Eight o'clock was the dinner hour, but when we arrived the Governor and a couple of gentlemen were the only Mexicans present. Meals in Mexico are never served for at least half-an-hour after the appointed time, sometimes, indeed, an entire hour elapses ; for, whatever may be the virtues of that strange land, punctuality cannot claim to be one of them.

With the exception of one Englishman and one American no person wore evening dress, the rest of the gentlemen being attired in frock-coats and the ladies in high gowns. Each new arrival was introduced to me, and after a few words in English, German, French, or my weird and wonderful Spanish, I returned to the sofa.

My Spanish was a source of great amusement to everyone. It was fearless and bad ; "Mrs. Tweedie talks Latin" was the usual comment. This sounds terribly learned, but really it was not so at all. A number of French words, an occasional Italian phrase, and a Latin noun here and there, all served up together with a smile and a good deal of English sauce, make a fairly satisfactory Spanish conversation.

To return to our dinner-party. At about 8.40 the party of twenty-two had assembled, and, taking the Governor's offered arm, we proceeded along innumerable corridors, passing *en route* a large portrait of President Diaz, which one invariably finds in every Municipal Palace in Mexico, until finally we reached the dining-room. The table, decked with quantities of tropical flowers and little bouquets for each of the guests, looked exceedingly pretty.

The following is a list of the Government officials who were present at this dinner at the Palace, Oaxaca, January 31st, 1901.

Señor Gobernador del Estado (Governor of the State), Licenciado (lawyer), Nicolas Lopez Garrido. Señor Secretario del Despacho (Secretary of State), Licenciado Francisco Belmar. Tesorero del Estado (Treasurer of the State), Señor Albino Lopez Garron. Magistrados de la Suprema Corte (Magistrates of Supreme Court), Licenciado Francisco Magro, Licenciado Rafael Hernandez. Director del Instituto de Ciencias y Artes del Estado (Director of the Institute), Dr. Aurelio Valdivieso. Señor Catedrático del Instituto (Professor at the Institute), Dr. Fernando Sologüren. Señor Diputado del Congreso del Estado (Congressman), Dr. Antonio Alvarez, and the two Mr. Rickards.

We had an excellent dinner of fifteen or twenty courses, and, according to custom, everyone drank everyone else's health to the word "salud."

Ices made their appearance about half way through the programme. They were followed by the national dish, namely, turkey, and after the dessert various puddings came on, according to Mexican fashion. Liqueurs, cigarettes and coffee followed, and then the men offered their arms to the women and escorted them back solemnly through various salons used for receptions, to the great drawing-room.

I had a most interesting chat with Señor Belmar, who has written grammars on many of the different Indian tongues, and is a great authority. He could not tell me the exact number of languages spoken in Mexico, but gave a list of those in the State of Oaxaca. Some people enumerate more, but they are really only dialects, he thinks.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN THE STATE OF OAXACA.

Zapoteco and its dialects.	Amurzgo.
Mixteco and its dialects.	Chontal.
Mazateco and its dialects.	Mixe and its dialects.
Trike.	Loque.
Choco.	Thrave.
Cincateco.	Azteco or Mexicano.
Chatino.	

Señor Francisco Belmar has published several interesting books on the subject :

The "Mexicano or Azteco" and the "Zapoteco" are essentially different in their grammars and dictionaries, but, he says, both of them belong to the group of agglutinant languages.

The morning after the banquet we were up before daylight, and ready to start on a thirty-mile drive to Mitla, where are probably the most famous ruins in all Mexico.

How proud Mexico ought to be of her ruins! They are some of the most wonderful monuments in the history of the world, and show that here dwelt a great and powerful nation at a time when we in Northern Europe were little better than savages! Here in Mexico, three, four, perhaps five thousand years ago, there existed a people of advanced ideas, who knew how to build monuments which, for masonry and carving, teach us lessons even to-day; who made beautiful pottery and elegant vessels, had their metal money and their gold ornaments, who were, in fact, a great people. It seems difficult to realise! Yet when Confucius was teaching the inhabitants of China respect for their already ancient customs, we were still barbarians, and these Toltecs, Zopatecs and Aztecs were advanced in civilization.

We saw something of the quaintness of the natives of modern Mexico on that thirty-mile drive from Oaxaca to Mitla.

Without exception that was quite the dustiest journey I ever experienced in all my life, even worse than the journey to Oaxaca. Mexico is verily the land of dust, dust such as is totally unknown in Europe, a sharp, gritty sand that hurts one's eyes and throat, and stings one's cheeks like an east wind. Then there are continual dust-spouts; when passing along a valley one may see half-a-dozen at a time; just a column of pure dust rising straight into the air for many feet. It will twirl round and round for a time and

then suddenly cease, or sometimes the top of the column blows off, just like the smoke from an engine. These whirlwinds of dust are intermittent, often near together, and of quite unequal magnitude. They only come in the dry winter. The consequence is that blue goggles and a large sombrero are absolutely essential to one's comfort in the mountains.

A good deal of the dust on the road to Mitla was caused by bullock waggons. It happened to be the weekly market, and there seemed to be hundreds of them. A couple of oxen were yoked, not close together, but far apart, so far, indeed, that there must have been some six or eight feet between the heads of some of them, and those great lumbering wheels of solid wood followed in the track made by the oxen's feet. This method of spanning the animals appears peculiar to Mitla. On their heads the bulls wore a sort of shield, resembling an inverted plate of matting or leather ; but whether this was to keep off the heat of the sun or fix the pole to which their horns were strapped it is impossible to say. Thus they trudged along, those slow old things, hour after hour, their noses well down in the dust ; the only excitement being an occasional prod from the driver's spear.

The carts were laden with fruit, flowers, vegetables, corn, stones, earth, anything and everything, in short ; and, although a woman and child sometimes drove, the man and his son generally plodded along on foot. Such primitive carts, too, quite ridiculously primitive, in which a modern sewing-machine looked entirely out of place.

Another example of the incongruities to be found in Mexico, where most things are primitive and hot, is the fact that natural ice is not uncommon in the tropics. It is procured in this wise ; the large leaves of the maguey plant, or big-leaved palm, are plaited like a box, and, taken in the evening to the mountains, are filled with water ; sometimes



Ox waggon, showing big wheels and bad streets.



Native Indian Church near Mitha, where the entire altar, rails, lamps, etc.
are of silver !

a hole is dug in the root of a pine tree or a shallow hole made in the earth ; these also are filled with water, which during the night freezes, and in the early morning the ice which rises is fetched by Indians, who consider it a great luxury, as it undoubtedly is.

How we enjoyed cold tea with a piece of ice in it after our long dusty mountain drive !

Most travellers agree cold tea is, *par excellence*, the drink for a hot country, just plain tea, drawn off from the leaves. It does more to quench thirst than any other liquid in the world ; lemon or lime in water come next, but alcoholic beverages only diminish thirst for the moment.

Numerous folk were riding, often pillion fashion, on horses, mules or donkeys, along the market road ; but it was a much more usual performance for the animal to be laden up until it could hardly move. Then on the top of everything was perched a woman and her baby. The husband marched solemnly beside her.

To a certain limited extent the women in Mexico have an easy time ; they never work in the fields, but they do everything else, and at Oaxaca they have a flourishing little business of their own.

In the surrounding villages the women get up early, grind their Indian corn, make their tortillas—the bread of the country—pack them in a big basket, which they carry on their backs, and while these tortillas are still hot, they trot off to the town and sell them. These baskets are heavy, they rest on the small of the back, as does the creel of a Scotch fish-wife, and are supported by a band across the forehead. The women are doubled right over with the weight ; their burden is hot, and the sun scorching, yet they run miles and miles to dispose of their wares.

Indians are so accustomed to bear heavy weights on their backs, that when they are going up a mountain they will take up a stone if they have nothing else to carry, just

for the purpose of securing their balance, therefore perhaps, after all, our pity is thrown away when we see them struggling, as we suppose, under a terrible load.

We saw some women in the valley with marvellous hair ; there were four or five whose tresses lay upon the ground when they stood erect. Yet patent hair wash is unknown ! This tribe is undoubtedly good-looking ; they have not the flat nose of the Aztecs at Xochicalco—the Zapotec nose is more Napoleonic in style. They are a very small people, except on the isthmus of Tehuantepec, a little farther south, where the finest Indians in Mexico to-day exist.

The women of the Mitla Valley are grown up at twelve or thirteen years of age ; they usually marry at fourteen, while the husbands are only a couple of years older. High festival is held at a wedding, the feasting often continuing for three days. Each district performs the marriage rite—when it is performed!—differently. As a rule the god-parents present the bride with her dress (*enaguas*) and head shawl (*rebozo*), and at the ceremony the young couple wear crowns of natural flowers. The end of the festivities is the formal carriage of all the girl's possessions to her new home, amidst the tears of her parents at parting with her.

Skeleton weddings were customary in Southern Mexico until four years ago, when they were prohibited by the sheriff or magistrate (*Jefe Politico*). These weddings took place on All Souls' Day, the day of prayer for departed souls, or rather began then, and usually lasted a week. Oaxaca was a great place for these gruesome performances. A woman's skeleton was dressed up as a bride with the skull showing ; the bridegroom was placed at the altar rails beside her, in full wedding attire, and they were accompanied by other skeletons dressed as Indians or monks. The idea was that "in the midst of life we are in death," and the populace prayed all round these weird figures, and, in some of the churches, food and sweets were brought for the

skeletons. It was a great occasion, when everyone called on everyone else, drank wine and ate cakes. Could anything more horrible possibly be imagined than a skeleton wedding? The descriptions given me by some of my friends were hideous.

The Government thought these skeleton weddings harmful and ridiculous, and consequently they were prohibited; but they are still talked about by the Indians with awe and respect. They are forbidden in the town of Oaxaca, but in the surrounding districts the unpleasing spectacle may still be seen on All Souls' Day. Sometimes a skeleton dressed up in this way is laid in the church, before the altar, as a reminder to prepare for Death and the Judgment Day.

Devil-dances go on more or less all over Mexico among the inhabitants on the feast day of each particular village, named after the village saint. The Indians paint their bodies to represent skeletons and dance wildly. They light a fire, and in the dark of night they yell and shriek and perform mad antics. They wear big feathered head-dresses, bits of looking-glass, beads and ornaments as at Guadalupe; but the custom is dying out, and is now kept up more for a lark than any serious reason. Originally they represented the Aztecs fighting for freedom against the Spaniards, but the meaning is being lost and forgotten.

Oddly enough the Zapotec language as spoken to-day is identically the same as that given in the old grammars. I learnt one word, "chang," meaning good-day, and most useful it proved.

It is strange, however, that the names in Oaxaca State should be of Aztec origin, but so it is, and this is yet another of the Mexican riddles still awaiting solution. Some of the village names are curious; for instance, we passed one called "St. James of the Drunkards," while its near companion was "The Five Flowers."

Opposite "St. James of the Drunkards" is Monte Alban, where there are numerous tumuli which have not yet been opened. What a mine of archæological surprises exists in Mexico; not one-quarter of the graves and tombs have ever been disturbed. Any responsible person can obtain permission from Government to dig; but he has to do so at his own expense, and one-half of what he finds must go to the Mexican museum, a fair arrangement. The Government helps him in every possible way, and gives him a free hand, although the Government inspector has to be present during the excavations.

Of course we stopped to see the big tree of Tule. It is one of the biggest trees in the world, not excepting the giants of California. Imagine, it is one hundred and fifty-four feet in circumference at a height of six feet from the ground, or, to give a better idea of its size—twenty-eight men with outstretched arms, their finger-tips just touching, can barely span its girth! It is a cypress, of which there are many in the country, especially the famous grove near Diaz' Palace at Chapultepec.

There are several queer caves along the route to Mitla, in which some of the poorer Indians still dwell, so there are cave-dwellers in Mexico even at this period of the world's history!

Our next halt was at Tlacolula, about twenty-four miles from Oaxaca, where the Jefe Politico—one of the most charming of the many Jefes Politicos I had the pleasure of meeting—was waiting to bid us welcome. After making acquaintance with nearly two dozen of these officials, I do not hesitate to say that Señor Andres Ruiz was one of the nicest and brightest of them all.

He welcomed us in the name of the State, and as we entered his patio the band struck up. He gave us luncheon, and as we had been travelling for some five hours, we were not sorry for the meal, which included a delicious ice-cream

As soon as the repast was over he asked if I should like to see his church, and knowing that it was famous for its carving, I quickly assented, after accepting a bouquet of pink and yellow roses brought by the village children.

This, be it understood, was a purely Indian village ; the people were of the Zapotec tribe ; it was twenty-four miles from a station—the railway line will run to Mitla shortly after this book appears in print—so that the village was simply a sample of an ordinary native village ; yet it had its market place, its public garden, its band, and a small inn.

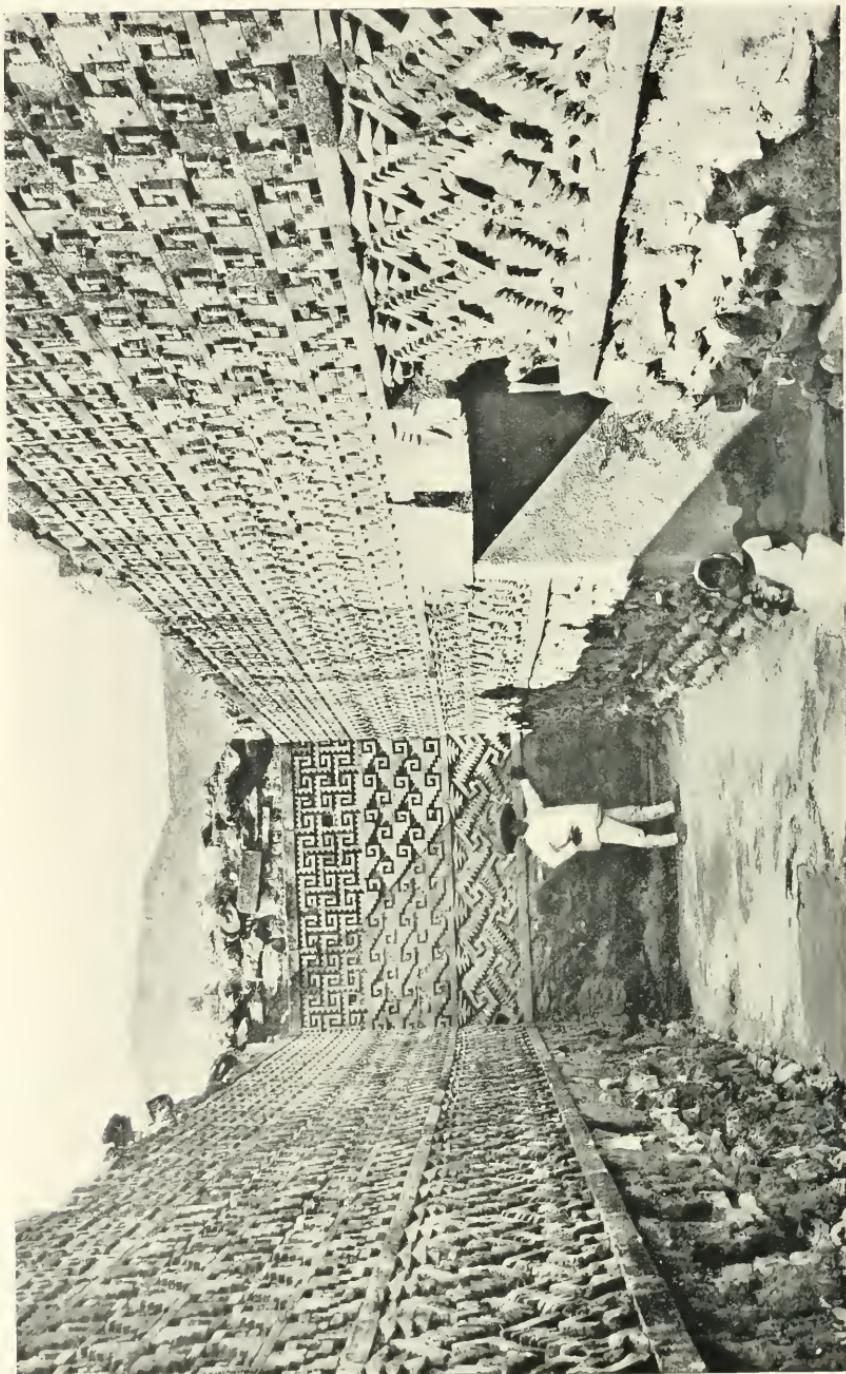
Everyone who visits Mexico should poke about an Indian village such as Tlacolula, and enjoy the priceless objects it often contains. Imagine our surprise in finding at this typical little Indian village a really beautiful church, with fine carvings and paintings, and the entire altar fronts made of solid silver ! There were no cloths or draperies, just solid silver, measuring some fourteen feet by three high. The entire frontals were embossed and chiselled in repoussé work, and truly magnificent silver lamps hung before them, lamps that Rome herself would be glad to possess ; the candlesticks standing six or seven feet high were of the same precious metal. There they are in the little church where the door is always left open ; but woe betide anyone who dared to harm them, for Indians are hot-blooded, and these are their own treasures ; they would kill anyone who stole or even shifted an article.

Some of the robes, jewels, and cups of the priests are lovely, in the best Spanish style, and all this rare treasure belongs to dark-skinned Zapotecs, who, be it owned, love and revere their possessions and keep them spotlessly clean. The contents of that little out-of-the-way church would do credit to any cathedral.

Nearly all the churches of Mexico are domed, and covered with beautiful tiles or with gold. A great many of these

domes and towers, however, are quite crooked, owing to earthquakes.

On the tower of Tlacolula Church were four musicians who played on the reed instruments of the country, and some Mexican flags had been put up. Wonderful to relate, it was not a feast day; in Mexico there really seem to be more feast days than any other days in the year, but this was still an extra holiday in honour of the English visitor!



Hall of Mosaics, Mitta.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANCIENT RUINS OF MITLA.

I AM no archæologist, but I found the ruins of Mitla most interesting and wonderful, the more so that new discoveries had been made four days previous to my visit, which consequently heightened their charm. The village lies in a flat and somewhat ugly valley, where every surrounding hill has its history. On all sides there are ancient tombs, many of which have not been opened ; there are tumuli everywhere, the whole valley is teeming with treasures only waiting to be explored, and there in the midst are the ruins of the great temples themselves. In that time, so long ago, about which we know so little, the whole district must have been thickly populated, or why these enormous temples, those fortresses on the hills and endless tumuli, or, as our Mexican friends term them, *pyramids* ?

One would hardly expect to find a little hotel in such a wild part ; but there is actually an hacienda where people can put up. With a crack of the whip we drove up in style to the door, where "mine host" was waiting to greet us.

We shook hands according to custom, and he bowed me to the room which had been ordered by the Governor of the State, whose guest I was during my week's stay in the State of Oaxaca. Two things struck me at once, namely, the marvellous pictures on the walls, and a couple of soup-plates near the bed, which were filled with cigarettes of

different kinds; apparently a little extra attention for my comfort!

The pictures had been executed by the landlord's daughter; they were wonderful embroideries in chenille and beads, and many other things, representing weird scenes and strange animals, and were carefully framed and preserved under glass. In the future they will probably find their way to some museum.

Among others, the Governor had kindly arranged for Dr. Sologüren to be one of my numerous escort to Mitla, and this gentleman proved a delightful guide, as he had done a vast amount of excavating there himself, and has a wonderful collection of ancient idols, as remarked in a previous chapter.

My good fortune, however, did not end here, for we were at once welcomed by Señor Batres, the Government inspector, whose acquaintance I had made a few weeks before in the drains of Mexico, when he showed me the newly-found Aztec altar. Señor Batres was employed at Mitla restoring parts of the temples, where walls had fallen down with age or been cracked by earthquakes.

A few minutes later Professor Marshall Saville, from the New York Museum, appeared upon the scene. He was completing his researches at Mitla, and only a few days previously had discovered a new Cruciform Cross. The Professor, an extremely good-looking young man, was most kind; he gave me pamphlets and photographs, and did everything in his power to make my visit pleasant.

It was a strange—but, for me, most fortunate—occurrence that the three men who, in modern times, had done all the excavations at Mitla, should meet together at the very time when I was there, for under their kindly guidance I saw so much more than could otherwise have been the case.

Next morning early the song of the mocking-bird filled the air; such a pretty song, too, until the mocking instinct

was suddenly aroused, and the bird left its own natural notes to imitate the cackle of a hen who was proudly announcing the fact that she had laid an egg. That exultant cry seems to be known all over the world, excepting Iceland, where cocks and hens were not, when I visited that land a few years ago.

The mocking-bird did its best to imitate Mrs. Hen, and then, contented with its efforts, went back to its own interrupted song.

Mexico is a strange land of beautiful birds of paradise and wondrous flowers ; but it is only the plainer birds that sing, for brilliant plumage hides no nightingale's throat, and but few of the lovely flowers have any scent !

Very little is really known concerning the ruins of ancient Mexico, of which those at Mitla are probably the finest specimens. Every archæologist has a different theory ; each thinks he is able to prove his ideas, and yet each generally disagrees with the other.

The date of these ruins is absolutely unknown ; they may be anything from two to five thousand years old, and that leaves a wide margin for speculation to wander over. Then again, various tribes are supposed to have built those wondrous temples ; but in all probability they are of Zapotec origin. The descendants of the Zapotec tribe live in the neighbourhood to-day, and bear the strongest resemblance to the faces found carved on the idols and pottery discovered in the tombs. The type of these idols is somewhat Jewish and a little Egyptian ; with good features, the Roman nose of the Jew, the thick lips and heavy eyelids of the Egyptians, and even the wig curl over the ear. They wore breast-plates, ear-rings, necklaces and other ornaments of stone or gold, some of which are of fine workmanship. They were not a rude people, indeed, on looking at some of their painting, the stone masonry of their walls, and many of their idols, one pictures them

a people of highly advanced civilisation, even if they did live five thousand years ago.

How am I, in a few pages, to give the slightest idea of Mitla, a place about which so many volumes have been written by archæologists of every nationality? Among the best are Charnay's book on the "Ancient Cities of the New World," William Holmes' "Archæological Studies among the Ancient Cities of Mexico," Payne's "History of the New World," Bancroft and Sandelier Medaillac's "Prehistoric America," all of which are full of interesting information.

So little were the ruins of Mitla appreciated or cared for during the last two or three hundred years, that the stones were taken out to build the church, or to form any building or coping that was necessary in the village! Part of the place was turned into a stable, and the priest lived in a frescoed chamber, one of many now whitewashed! But under the able guidance of President Diaz this is being altered, and Professor Batres is now employed by the Government in replacing as many of the stones as he can, in putting iron supports under door-ways, where the enormous lintels have been cracked by earthquakes, and propping up walls which seem likely to fall.

All these restorations are being made none too soon. Señor Batres has replaced one wall which had almost entirely fallen down. It seems that terrible desecration has gone on in the past few years owing to tourists and others. What a pity it is that Mexico has no society—such as we have in England—for the preservation of her ancient buildings! Why, they are chapters in history which, once destroyed, can never be replaced. Mexico ought to guard her ancient ruins as her proudest possessions; they are unique, and not a stone of such a history should be destroyed by the hands of modern man. Once defaced—as, alas! nearly all the mural paintings have already been at

Mitla—they are gone for ever, and one of Mexico's greatest attractions is lost to the world. The Government up to the present has not been vigilant enough in the preservation of her treasures.

And now to describe my own impressions of the ruins of Mitla. After stumbling over a quantity of newly-excavated débris we suddenly found ourselves in a great square courtyard. Facing us, and also to the right and left, were the ruins of the temples, but, alas ! the fourth side—where we stood—had been almost destroyed.

Each temple was approached by a flight of steps running its entire length, and each temple had three doors, as the majority of Mexican churches have to-day. There were no rounded arches. Everything at Mitla is straight and in line. One imagines they were temples, not because there are altars, but because there are tombs beneath, and, being in a valley, they could hardly be fortifications, added to which there are many fortifications of totally different form amid the surrounding hills. Why there were four such temples is another question, unless they were raised to the four winds !

The entire walls were ornamented with carvings, which are known as *Grecques*. Some of these are of charming design ; they are cut in the solid slabs of stone, or sometimes mosaiced on. When the latter was the case thousands and thousands of different pieces of stone were employed to form the geometrical pattern arranged in formal panels.

It will be remembered that at Xochicalco human figures, large eagles, and serpents formed the design ; there was nothing conventional, and the all-over pattern was chiselled out of the stone by the Aztecs ; but at Mitla it is absolutely different. Every pattern is strictly geometrical ; there are neither figures nor animals ; but fifteen distinct geometrical designs are found, repeated again and again in panels, a

good idea of which can be formed from the illustration, "The Hall of the Grecques."

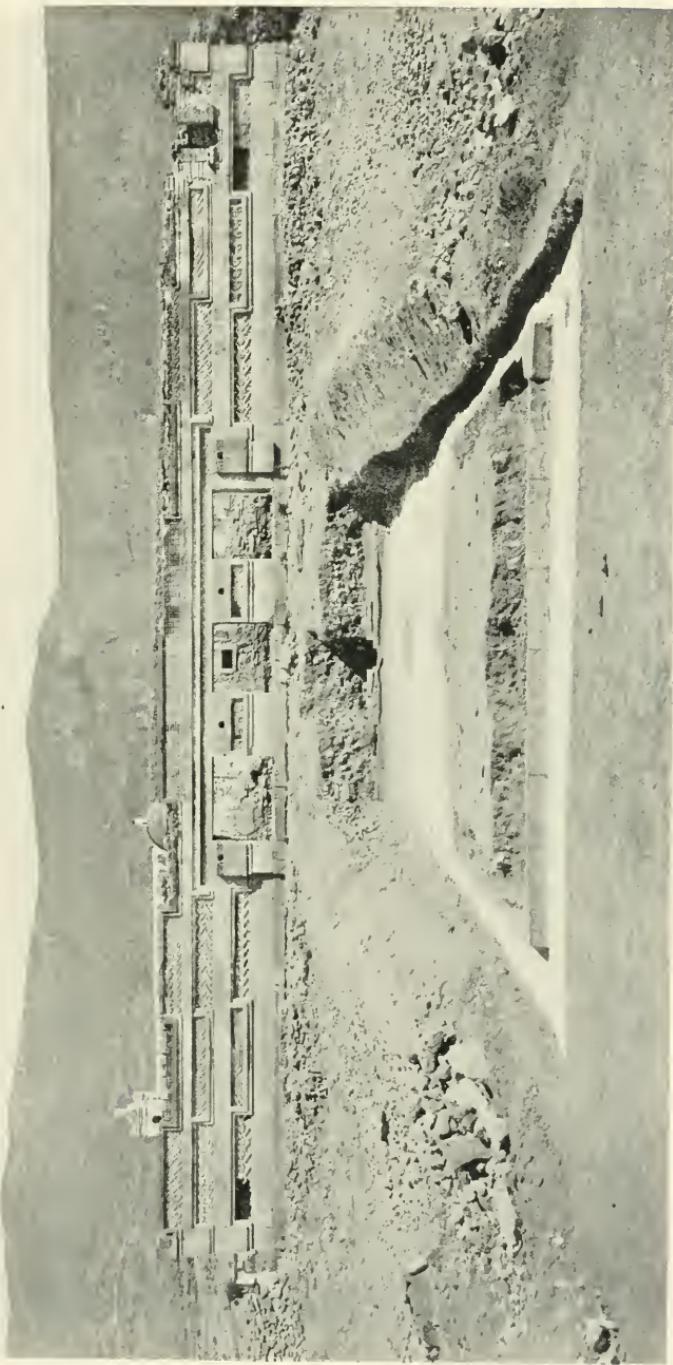
It was certainly most impressive ; the size of the place, the beautiful workmanship of the geometrical carvings, the wonderful proportions of everything, betrayed the record of a great people.

The "Hall of the Monoliths" is perhaps the best known of the ruins at Mitla ; the columns are not carved. They stand about eleven feet four inches high, and formerly supported a wooden roof, the holes where the beams were fixed being visible in the walls. There are no carved monoliths among these ruins, in which they differ from those of Yucatan. Professor Saville thinks that :—" Mitla and the Yucatan ruins probably belong to the same epoch, and are the remains of a people having kindred ancestors."

He suggests that the building of Mitla was effected by the Nahuas, and that Zapotecan occupancy was the result of conquest. He adds further :—" Modern research points to a common ancestry of both Nahuan and Mayan people."

Professor Marshall Saville's most important excavations have been, undoubtedly, in the courtyard of the palaces or temples, where he has just brought to light a stone-work substructure, showing that this part of the building had received as much attention as the edifices themselves. It had a beautiful face of cement, and the inclined stone slabs which form the long steps to the various door-ways are of perfect workmanship. The courtyard measurement of the subterranean gallery is exactly 117 feet square, so exact that the four sides are not a fraction out ! The width of the stair-ways leading up to each of the four edifices is equally correct.

The cement floor was formerly painted red in almost Pompeian colouring ; the basis of the substructure, covered with cement, was also red. There is little doubt that these



View of one of the Temples of Mithra, at the back of which is the Hall of the Monoliths, showing where Professor Marshall Saville found cement pavement (now cleared) and set of steps leading to the Temple. Dark hole is entrance to Cruciform Chamber.

people knew how to mix paints with ease, for the walls were apparently washed with whitish earths and iron oxides. Then again, such scraps as remain of the mural decorations are of many colours, although white and red predominate. The paintings, unlike the carvings, are not geometrical, but represent life forms conventionally treated. Reproductions of these appear in Dr. Eeler's (of Berlin) work on Mitla. These mural designs show the remarkable mythological subjects so well reproduced in Lord Kingsborough's wonderful book.

The steps show distinct signs of having been repaired, which Professor Saville thinks was probably the work of the Toltecs. When these steps are all excavated, and the débris is entirely cleared away, the temples will look more imposing than they have done for centuries.

The new Cruciform Chamber, only opened a few days before our arrival, has its entrance in the courtyard, and passes directly under the steps of the substructure.

“Will you come and see my new cross?” asked Professor Saville, to which proposition we willingly assented, and he accordingly sent one of the peons—who were busily engaged in carrying earth away from the courtyard—to fetch a lamp.

It was the strangest entrance imaginable; a large stone slab which had closed the mouth of the tomb had been thrown back slanting-wise, and down this we had to slide. It was too large to step or crawl across, so the only way to manage was to sit down and just slip along the stone. This would have been all right if there had been standing room at the bottom; but unfortunately the opening was barely three feet in height, and the entrance for some distance was scarcely so much.

The Professor went first with the lamp, and then I slid after him as ungracefully as possible—and that is saying a good deal. Arrived at the bottom, I found I could not

stand, I could not even sit erect with my big Mexican hat on my head, so off it had to come.

"Give me time to breathe," I cried, for in spite of the little lamp it was almost impossible to see, "and tell me if I am to crawl, or if there is room to walk bent double?"

"You can walk bent double, but really double, for the passage is only three feet high for a distance of a few feet," was the cheerful reply; "further on you can stand upright."

So bent double, literally double—I am sure the passage was not even three feet high—I endeavoured to walk, and, as the Yankees say, "got right there."

Ah, here was relief! here we could stand! and what a surprise!

The tomb, which is made in the shape of an exact cross, is eight-and-a-half feet high, so anyone can stand erect happily. The length of the arms is precisely forty-five feet, and every inch of the walls is carved!

It was remarkable, truly remarkable! In the first place it was an exact cross—that same cross which seems to be found all over the world and in all forms of religion, yet built long before the introduction of Christianity. In this case the foot faced the west, the idea again being that the soul went to rest with the setting sun. The door-ways of the tombs invariably face this way, and are sealed by large stones.

There we stood in the tomb of some king or priest, a tomb that had not been opened for centuries untold, and, with the exception of Mrs. Saville, I was the first woman who had entered that carved edifice may be for thousands of years.

"How wonderfully those stones fit," I exclaimed, amazed at their size and workmanship.

"Yes; the mason's art was more perfect then than it is to-day, and Mitla is an excellent example. In those days they cut and fitted their work to perfection. Those grecques

were cut, whether by stone chisels, or how, no one knows, for few implements of any kind have been found."

"Is this in any way Aztec?" I asked, noting its dissimilarity to other Aztec work.

"No, to my mind it resembles Toltec and Zapotec workmanship far more than Aztec," was the Professor's reply.

In the other cross found by the early Spaniards under another of the temples, the grecques are of mosaic work, each bit of the pattern being formed by a separate piece of stone being fitted together to form the whole; but in the case of this new Cruciform the grecques are carved in the solid stone, and though they have been buried for centuries, they are simply perfect in condition. The depth of the carving is about three-quarters of an inch, and as a rule the serrated edges of the patterns are slightly bevelled.

No one knows how they were carved; but there are distinct marks of pencil or paint, or whatever they used in those far away times (not burnt wood, for that would have worn off), which show that the pattern was carefully traced before the carvers began their work. The metric system comes out perfectly in all the grecque work, which looks as if these ancient people measured by metric rule!

Nothing of any importance was found in this new tomb; a few bones, odd broken bits of pottery, and a little earth and rubbish. Sometimes, however, burnt bones are found, sometimes whole skeletons, often in a sitting posture. This tomb had evidently been emptied of corpse, idols, and offerings, and then time had closed its entrance. This entrance question struck me as strange. I saw four of the five known Cruciforms, all more or less perfect, which all showed that endless time and pains had been expended on them, and yet every one had a horribly awkward entrance, just a long, low passage-way, rough and rude in the extreme. Why, if the Zapotees paid such attention to the cross itself, did they make the entrance to it like a drain? It must have

been most difficult to convey the dead through such a narrow channel, and if the cross were considered worthy of so much work, why should there not have been a proper way to get into it, unless it was to hide away the spirit of the dead, and prevent his having future egress to annoy the living. The portals to the temples and palaces are beautiful, but the entrances to the tombs terrible.

Professor Saville, summarizing in a general way as the results of his explorations, has brought the following facts to light :—

Funeral urns were generally placed in series of five in front of the tombs, on the roof, or fastened into the façade.

These vaults are properly ossuaries or places where the bones of the dead were deposited. Tombs exist in Xoxo outside of the burial mounds. House sites may be looked for in the vicinity of the main group. The absence of stone implements is notable, only a single tiny arrow-point and two celts being found.

The mortuary custom of painting the bones red, the placing of food and incense in the tomb, the interment of decapitated heads, the sparsity of personal ornaments buried with the dead, and the absence of decorated vessels in the vaults, are features brought out by his explorations.

The custom of filing and inlaying the teeth was practised, and the use of hematite as an inlay was found for the first time. This ancient custom can now be traced from the region of Arizona to Southern Central America.

The terra-cotta tubing found in a mound may perhaps be explained as serving some mythological purpose—perhaps to form an outlet for the escape of the shade of the dead. This explanation, however, is not altogether satisfactory, and further excavation in this region is needed to shed light on its significance.

The great importance attached to mortuary rites is shown by the elaborately constructed tombs containing mural



Exterior of Mitla grave.



Interior of Mitla grave.

paintings and hieroglyphic inscriptions. The terra-cotta figures and the funeral urns attest the very high attainment of the ancient Zapotecos in the art of modelling earthen objects.

The Hall of Kings was being restored by Señor D. Leopoldo Batres. He was doing the work splendidly, and really having the stones replaced with such care it was not possible to discover which of them had just been put back. Some of the stones that he was using in his repairs he had found half a mile away in the village; but so carefully had he fitted each into its own place that no one could have told that some of them had been absent for centuries! He is working for Government. Let us hope that means the beginning of a stricter survey and preservation of the treasures of Mexico. The Professor is of French extraction, and by means of that tongue we became excellent friends. He is genial, a good talker, and did much towards making that visit to Mitla appear like a fairy dream. His son works with him, and is as keen as his father on things archæological.

Another young man who is deeply interested, and has done considerable excavation, is Constantine Rickards, one of the men who met us in Tomellin cañon, sent by the Governor of Oaxaca to translate for, and help us, during the week we were the guests of the State. His father has a charming house in Oaxaca, where we enjoyed a delightful dinner party.

When looking back and comparing Xochicalco with Mitla, it was interesting to note the differences between the respective ruins. The fortress of Xochicalco lay amid far more beautiful surroundings than the other, and of the two its position, perched on the top of a hill, was the more impressive. It was bold and grand; the designs of gigantic Indians in war plumes, of serpents with strange heads and long twisted tails, and eagles' wings outspread, the grandeur

of the carvings, and the splendid workmanship, were all superior, to my mind, to anything at Mitla. The ruins themselves, though not nearly so large, were finer in design, and their situation was imposing. Xochicalco was probably the work of the Aztecs, those wonderful people Cortés conquered.

At Mitla the work appeared more modern, and yet it was probably older: everything exactly matched everything else. There was a courtyard with four temples all one storey high, all windowless, and each with three doors. The designs upon the walls were smaller, neater, and more carefully executed; but the position of the Zapotecan temples in the valley was poor in comparison with that of the Aztec fortress on the hill. Yet Mitla denoted more inhabitants—a vast population in fact, who possessed, evidently, a greater knowledge of how to build, who even possessed drain-pipes of clay! These ruins were of Zapotec origin, quite another tribe of people, with dissimilar ideas.

Professor Saville suggested we should visit the temples in the evening. It was moonlight, the moon was full, and shone straight over our heads—so straight, indeed, that we could not see our own shadows. This effect was caused by our being in the tropics; the sun travels twenty-three and a half degrees north and south of the equator in the course of a year, and it is consequently overhead at mid-day on some day of the year at all places between latitudes twenty-three and a half degrees north and south—that is, within the tropics. The same thing happens with the moon; but as the moon's path is inclined to that of the sun, at an angle of five degrees, the full moon appears overhead at some time or other at all places between latitudes twenty-eight and a half degrees north and south. This, however, does not happen every year as it does in the case of the sun. We were fortunate enough to experience the curious effect.

There was something very wonderful in the sight of

those ruins by moonlight. There stood those three great temple fronts, each with its triple portal, and flights of steps leading to the courtyard below. Fancy could picture the priests of yore, issuing forth on just such a night, followed by their acolytes and choristers, and in solemn procession descending those steps to the scent of the wafted incense, made from copal, such as is used in the churches of Mexico to-day, and accompanied by the chant of human voices. We seemed to see them crossing that great square court, pausing finally before a sacrificial stone, similar to that which is now in the Mexican Museum ; we saw the human victim led forth, bound and fettered, and then—— !

We could picture the subsequent banquet on human flesh in the Hall of Kings, the revelry of barbaric wealth and magnificence.

In the solitude of those ruined temples and palaces in that silent valley, we seemed to see the triumphal dance of the Indians as they capered around the wretched prisoners of war, always offered up in sacrifice. We could picture their feathered heads and jewels, their breast-plates of gold, and weapons of war, such as are depicted in the tiny scrap of painting which yet remains on one of the walls.

Only two or three years since, many of those paintings still existed, but the application of wet sponges for the benefit of some American tourists, and the picking off of bits here and there for the amusement of others, have effectually destroyed treasures that can never be replaced, and, too late, the Government has awakened to the duty of protecting what is left.

The old MSS. were painted on cotton cloth, prepared skins, the leaf of the aloe, or a composition of silk and gum. It is a collection of these ancient writings that Lord Kingsborough reproduced in his wonderful work on Mexico. The pictures give some idea of the gorgeous

colouring of those days, the fantastic dress of the Indians, and the wealth and splendour that rivalled ancient Rome.

Yes, we seemed to see it all in the moonlight. We could almost hear the cry of the victims whose blood was poured out on that central stone, ere their bodies were taken behind the temples to the great banqueting halls for the subsequent feast. We could picture that feast of human flesh, in which women, alas! joined—for women were well treated in those days, and shared all the joys (?) of their husbands; they were not shut up in any way. On the contrary, they were as free and independent as the Zapotec women of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec are to-day. Polygamy, though permitted, was only practised among the wealthier classes.

According to Professor Marshall Saville the first mention of Mitla occurs in the Post Columbian Nahuatl Book, known as the Codex Telleriano Remensis, under the account of what transpired during the reign of Ahuistotl, the Aztec monarch who preceded Montezuma.

Fray Diego Duran places the subjugation of Mitla during the reign of Montezuma the First, and the majority of original sources agree in dating that reign between the years 1440 and 1454 A.D.

Father Martin de Valencia, a Spanish priest, passed through Mitla in 1537, and describes a temple in ruins containing columns. But all this is modern writing; the temples had then been destroyed—who can tell what they were like centuries previously?

The village of Mitla is almost as interesting as are the ruins themselves. Here dwell the descendants of the very people who built those great temples. They are still most primitive in their manners and customs, chiefly employed in cultivating the soil and tending cattle and sheep. Tiny huts made of bamboo form these Zapotecan dwellings, which contain but one small room, eight feet by twelve being the average size. If these Indians are rich they build



Zapotec girls, in the Hall of Monoliths, Mitla.



Hall of Monoliths, Mitla.

a kitchen, just a tiny place shaped like a tent, on much the same principle as their hut, and here the wife makes her tortillas or does her washing.

One family we visited was quite remarkable. The mother, presumably about thirty-five, was a well-preserved, handsome woman for her age ; and the eldest daughter, a girl of seventeen, could but be considered lovely. She was very small, five feet at most—as are all the Indians—and dark-skinned, her complexion being of a rich nut-brown hue. She was attired in a sort of chemise low in the neck and short in the sleeves, which showed a perfectly modelled bust ; round her throat she wore red coral for luck and some curiously-coloured beads. Her long black hair hung in two plaits, into which red braid had been twisted, so that what fell below her waist was really a tassel of braid. The mother, on the other hand, wore her plaits coiled round her head, which, as they were interwoven with bright green wool, had the effect of a laurel wreath.

Both mother and daughter wore the long strip of skirt round the body, and as they had just finished weaving a new one, they exhibited it with pride. The coarse black material was woven in three strips, which were stitched together with coloured wool ; it was nearly a yard wide, its length about eight feet. It had no shape. The girl poked one end between her legs, quickly bound it round and caught it in at the waist by a sash-band. This is the usual skirt ; but made in a shorter length it does not always fold over so well, hence one often sees the bare leg of an Indian woman. They wear nothing on their feet.

A small personage of about two—the youngest of the woman's five children—was dressed in the quaint old fashion of the babies of the district. He had on long white trousers and a coat like that of his father ; indeed, boys and girls, as soon as they can stand, are dressed exactly like their elders.

He was told to say " How do you do ? " to the lady.

I gave him my hand, and the tiny creature kissed it ! His little lips and hands were so cold that kiss really gave me a shock ; but I suppose Indian blood must be thin and poor, for I never shook hands with any native who felt warm —they always seem to be cold and clammy. To my mind there is something almost uncanny about them—snake or fish like—although they are beautiful in shape and remarkable in carriage. They are poorly clad, and yet they surely cannot feel the cold as we do, or presumably they would alter matters and do something to warm up that chill, thin blood of theirs, and set it circulating more freely through their veins.

At another wigwam they were making rope ; a boy with a stick was turning one end round and round with both hands to give the rope a twist. A man was standing thirty feet away, and as the boy twirled the rope, he added on bit by bit shreds of vegetable fibre, and so dexterous was this gentleman that he quickly added a foot, and beautifully and securely woven it was, too. Near him were a couple of women squatting on the foreground ; one of them was spinning her wool, which she had dyed herself with vegetable dyes ; she had a small earthenware bowl, and in it stood her bobbin—about eight inches high—which she set spinning by a touch of her fingers, when it just continued the movement like an everlasting top, while she spun her wool off the bobbin.

Her mother, close at hand, was “ carding ” the wool ; she was doing it rapidly on the most simple wooden structure, chanting a little dirge to herself the while. Many of these aboriginal modes of doing work exist in the Mitla valley to-day. What simple folk they are ! They live on next to nothing, their homes are nothing, they possess almost nothing, they know nothing ; they are but little removed from mere animal existence, and yet they appear quite contented and happy !

Would we change with them? No! Only those who have experienced the sorrows and turmoils of life are able to appreciate its pleasures and its joys! Adversity is a fine school for the mind.

Each hut had its tiny altar; some great and wonderful oleograph of the Virgin Mary formed the centre-piece; fresh floral offerings in blue or red china vases stood below, and a tiny lamp hung before the picture, to be lighted on all feast days. These poor folk are most devout, but their religion is tempered by much fear; they believe in devils and hell fire and other terrible things; so that though their lives seem to be happy in the present, their dreams of the future must be weird indeed.

The entire village retires to bed about 7.30 p.m., when the stars come out. The women begin to light their cupful of fire about 5.30 a.m., in order to make their tortillas with the break of day. As one rides through such a village in the early morning, a thin veil of smoke rises from the little homes, and the glint of the flame flickers through the bamboo walls.

Our cavalcade was ready, and we started soon after seven a.m. one morning for Upper Guiaroo, where we wished to see an ancient fortress and a Cruciform Cross up in the mountains. The first part of the road was good; but as we began to ascend the mountain the path narrowed considerably, and often the horses could barely secure foothold; Mexican ponies, however, are like cats, and they always manage to get along somehow.

Every shrub in Mexico appears to bear a thorn; not a little thorn, oh dear no! The thorns are one and even three inches long, and as stiff as the blade of a pen-knife; certainly our ride that day proved this fact to several members of our party by rending their garments.

The path had been made a few months before by Professor Saville and his workmen, when they were excavating at the

summit ; and though it was only a few months, some of his excavations—such as holes used for sacrificial fires—were already covered by greenery, so great is the rapidity of vegetable growth in the tropical parts of Mexico.

Up, up we went—my riding astride affording amusement to some of the party—until we suddenly found ourselves close to the ancient fortress. The walls were of natural stones—adobes (the native sun-burnt brick) piled one upon the other, and several distinct courts and chambers were visible.

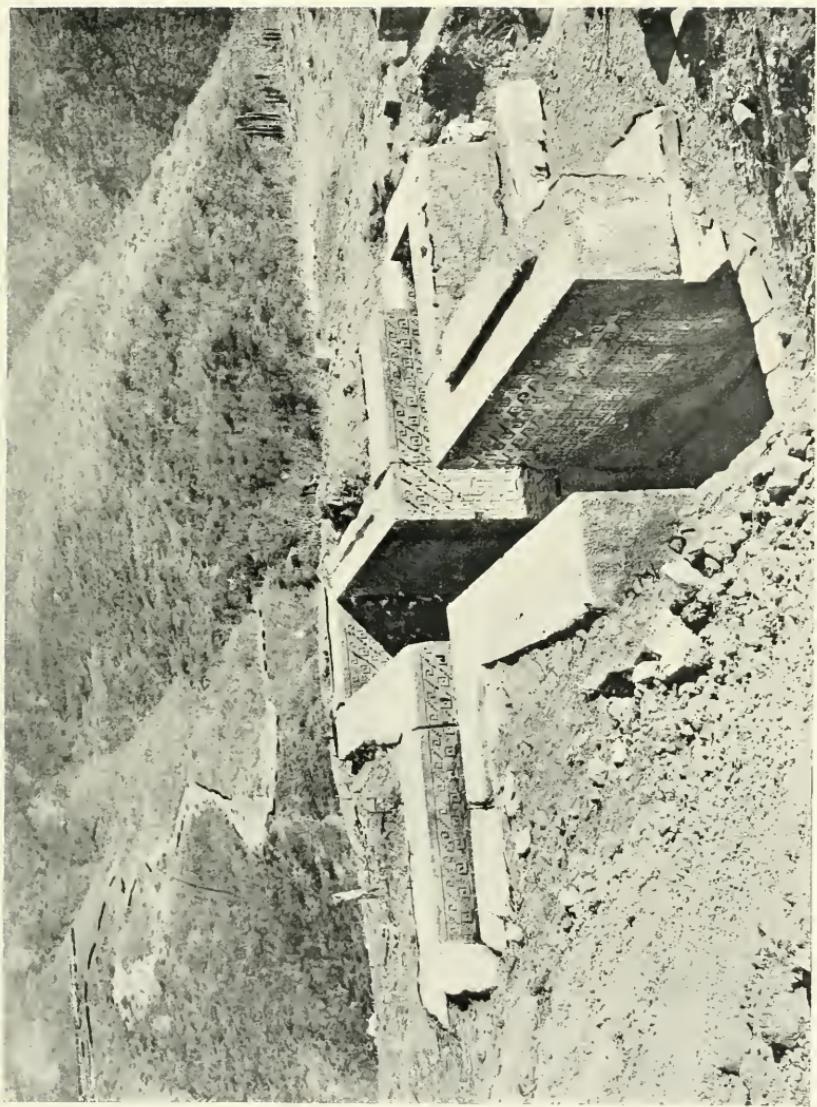
What a splendid position it was for a fort ! We could see for miles and miles right over that wide valley, and across some of the smaller chains of hills to the more mountainous regions beyond. Deep caverns or barrancas surrounded us on all sides, while opposite lay a typical zig-zag mountain path leading to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

“ It is a five days’ ride from here,” was the reply to my question as to the distance. “ The route lies right through the mountains ; but there is barely one village on the way, merely a reed hut for shelter, and tortillas the only food.

I felt sorely tempted to undertake that ride through the wild mountains ; but as no one else seemed anxious to face the discomforts, it would, of course, have been little short of madness to attempt such a journey without a properly-arranged escort.

Leaving our horses with their strange and wondrous trappings at the fortress, we walked to the real summit of the hill to see the great Cruciform Cross. It may here be remarked that often quite a poor peon has most wonderful horse furniture ; he sometimes possesses a saddle and bridle worth £5 in English gold, and yet the horse he rides would not be valued at one-tenth of the embroidered leather he carries.

The cross was wonderful ; in the first place it had no roof, and therefore we could see it in all the perfection of



Cruciform tomb at Guiaro, near Mitla.

daylight. It had evidently been made, like the others, for the tomb of some great priest or king ; but according to Professor Saville—who cleared it out in 1900—had never been completed. It had not been closed in, and lying close at hand were several massive stones hewn ready for use, with round holes in them, showing they had been “pinched” in place by means of holes at the back. The perfect joining of these stones shows thorough mastery of the mason’s art.

The carving of the grecques was beautiful, so clean and clearly cut, and yet what could these ancient people have done their chiselling with ? No steel or iron tools have been found, though the discovery of obsidian blades show that these were in use. Rough stone implements like stunted arrow-heads with sharp points have been found, and with these doubtless some of the carving was accomplished.

One of the patterns on the walls was a cross oftentimes repeated, that self-same equal-sided cross which appears again and again all over the world. There are fifteen different and distinct designs of grecques at Mitla, and although sometimes the pattern is made up by small pieces of stone arranged mosaic fashion together, yet the generality are carved in the solid blocks. No structures of a similar nature are known in any other part of Mexico or Central America, and these five are probably the most important burial chambers in the new world, owing both to their size and the beauty and preservation of the stone work.

The walls of this cross—which is an absolutely complete +, all four sides being alike—were about eight feet high and at least thirty-two feet long in the arms. Here again the grecques were carved and not mosaic, and evidently the whole had originally been painted white, the patterns being outlined in red, as the colour still remains in places.

There are three designs in these carvings, which complete the fifteen designs found at Mitla.

The stones had been brought from a quarry about a mile away, where some still remain, and must have been carried this distance over a mountain top, down a deep barranca, and up a steep incline! Several large stones are still to be found at these quarries; others are lying on the road between the quarries and Mitla, thus showing that the work was interrupted before completion. It is supposed that these enormous masses were moved by means of rollers and ropes; but on viewing the steep sides of the barrancas one marvels how they were ever pulled up at all.

The stones, though probably dressed at the quarries, were undoubtedly carved after being placed in position.

The lines of the crosses are always exactly five degrees east and north, and there seems to be no doubt but that these people worshipped the North Star.

The Mayas peopled Yutacan, and *may* have built Mitla, which is however more commonly considered the work of the Zapotecs, because, although the former used arches in their buildings, there are only square doors in Mitla. William Holmes, when writing of these Mayas, says:—

“*The Maya Race.*—At the period of conquest the Maya tribes occupying the peninsula of Yucatan, and considerable portions of neighbouring territory to the south and west, are said to have comprised in the neighbourhood of 2,000,000 souls. It is said that some bands have never been fully conquered to-day, and they practically substantiate the claim by holding the temples of their fathers by force of arms, defying all comers, whether white or red.

“Physically the Mayas are short, sturdy, and dark, possessing generally the typical characteristics of the red race. Their mental equipment is conceded to be of a high order as compared with other native stocks. Their origin is largely a matter of conjecture. One account (Brinton, D.G., *American Hero Myths*, p. 145) connects them with the history of the god and culture-hero Itzamna, and derives an important element or division of the race from the east, where they are said to have come across—or rather through—the ocean, thus forcibly recalling the story of Atlantis. The more probable derivation is, however, from the west, as tradition, myth, art, and geographical conditions point in this direction more decidedly than in any other. It appears that there are few ties of language with the Aztecs or other Mexican peoples, though there are numerous and striking analogies in arts and customs, and it is not improbable that in the course of their history the Mayas have come into close contact with the great tribes of the Plateau of Mexico. Indeed, all may have had a common origin to the north in Mexico, or even beyond the Rio Grande.

“In the culture scale this people stood at the head of the American tribes. They

were still, properly speaking, barbarians, but in several respects seemed to be on the very threshold of civilisation. Their status may be compared to that of the Greeks and Egyptians immediately preceding the dawn of history, and we may assume that they were, as measured by Aryan rates of progress, perhaps not more than a few thousand years behind the foremost nations of the world in the great procession of races from savagery toward enlightenment. It is certain that they were already enjoying a rude system of historic records, and were the only nation on the western continent that had made any considerable headway in the development of a phonetic system of writing. Their hieroglyphics occupy a place, not yet well defined, somewhere along the course of progress from pictograph to letter, and are consequently difficult of interpretation. There is no doubt, however, that an age of literature was actually, though slowly, dawning in America when the shock of conquest came."

It was wonderful to pause and think of all these things as we sat on those monster stones forming the cruciform chamber. Idly I poked about with my riding-whip, till something appeared, and spoke to me, as it were, from the past.

I did not dig nor delve; but I stumbled across what are to me a couple of treasures—a little bit of brown pottery and a thin black obsidian blade (volcanic glass) which had formerly been used as a knife. Triumphantly I bore away my trophies, two little treasures revealed to me from a long ago past, feeling, indeed, an archæologist of great import to have found such trophies at far-away Mitla! A couple of pieces of old money were given to me subsequently; they look like flat copper picks—six inches from tip to tip—and the handle—two inches wide—is equally long. Such large coins remind one of the ancient money of China or Finland. But among my little collection four small gods forming part of a necklace, and the head of an idol, with the heavy eyes, thick lips, wide nose and side curl of Egypt seem to me most precious.

On our return journey we stopped at an hacienda where there is another cruciform cross, which has been known since the days of the Spaniards. The farm house is now built above it. In the courtyard was the open threshing-floor; these concrete threshing spaces may be seen all over Mexico—they are round like a circus, have a stone curbing

and a cemented floor, and therein trudge the horses or mules as they do when working at the ore in Pachuca.

The Indian corn is thrown on the floor, and mules march solemnly round and round to thresh off the husks. It may be well here to mention one of the chief uses of these husks. They are not only utilised for fodder, but as a case for the food of man ; the famous *tamales* of Mexico (minced meat or vegetable concoctions) are enclosed in them. The cob from which the husk has been removed is still generally manipulated by hand, the beads of maize being scraped down inch by inch.

The primitive people in the Mitla valley are probably the direct descendants of that great race who raised those wonderful temples. A handful of villagers is all that is now left of the vast population which formerly filled this wide valley.

How beautiful everything seemed, how picturesque the surroundings, and how interesting my companions, for was I not accompanied by the three archæologists to whom all the excavations of late years are due. How glorious the flowers, the singing birds, the dear little humming-birds of brighter plumage, the gorgeously-hued butterflies—it was all so lovely, so sleepy, so strange.

Little did I dream of the wicked sprite laughing at my joy, which was so shortly to be turned to tears. Life and happiness were soon to be followed by pain and well nigh death !



Ancient fortress, Upper Guiaroo, Mitla.



Burning effigies of Judas, in Mexico City, on Easter Saturday.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RIVERS IN THE TROPICS.

NEW ORLEANS is the great centre of Carnival festivities in the New World, for there the gaieties exceed those in Italy or the Riviera, but in Mexico City, Carnival time, is now but a poor affair. A few second-class balls on Sunday nights, attended by the "half-world," as one paper announced, a few tawdry dresses on the paseo, and some students arrayed in old Spanish costumes, made but a poor representation of the rejoicings of old.

On Ash Wednesday, however, every good Catholic wore black, and went to mass for the first daily attendance at forty consecutive services, and every good Catholic also had a cross marked upon his forehead in ashes by the priest. Some of the older people refuse to wash off this cross, and therefore all day may be seen walking about the streets with a dusky shadow across their brows.

On the Saturday morning before Easter Sunday all this "humiliation" ends. It is a day of gladness, when the sin of Judas is punished. At ten o'clock in the morning the bells of the Cathedral and every other church ring out *La Gloria*, and immediately numerous effigies of the traitor are burnt.

Now this strange and wonderful custom is, so far as I know, peculiar to Mexico. As they dressed up clowns, ballet dancers, and odd figures in paper for the piñatas, so they dress up yet more wonderful representations of

Judas. They make a hideous paper doll, two, three, four, or even five feet high, inside they put bread for the poor, or—in richer districts—coins, they fill the puppet with paper, pasteboard or straw, and hang him from a cord across the street; any street, every street, garden or square has its Judas, and while *La Gloria* peals forth each is ignited. The poor rush forward and scramble for the coins or bread, and altogether “have a fine time!”

If any particular man be specially unpopular in a village, he often figures as Judas, and is burnt in effigy.

Until 1898 the Jockey Club in the City had the most famous representations of that traitor. The club is rich, and each of the three figures cost from two to three hundred dollars. One would be on horseback, the horse fashioned in pasteboard, but the accessories a real Mexican embroidered saddle, bridle and stirrups. The mock Judas wore real trousers, tight and close fitting, with silver coins down his legs, and a valuable hat. Inside were rockets, and when the thing was lighted the arms and legs jumped, much to the delight of the *pelados* (populace) below, who were sometimes almost crushed to death in their endeavours to get a bit of the Judas. Free fights ensued, the trousers were torn shred by shred to get at a coin, until finally the police, being unable to cope with the mob, intimated to the Jockey Club that the authorities hoped they would discontinue such a dangerous custom. The Jockey Club, therefore, no longer exhibits these effigies, which nevertheless are still displayed at every corner of the town, the people hugely enjoying such gruesome spectacles.

I saw very little of the Carnival, for I was ill.

Punch's advice to persons about to marry applies to those who think of getting ill in Mexico. DON'T!

That is supposing you value your life, or unless your nerves are of cast iron or steel, DON'T.

It was a funny experience all the same, and I can afford to laugh at the memory now, but at the time, well—I could only repeat *Punch's* wise counsel, DON'T.

On returning from one of my various expeditions to the tropics—the one and only occasion on which I was stupid enough to ride without riding-boots—one of my knees looked red and swollen ; a few hours later the other knee followed suit, whilst various red patches appeared on my legs, extending to the ankle, which soon became so horribly painful, that when I stood up I could have shrieked aloud, whereupon I sought a doctor.

“ Poisoned bites,” remarked that sapient individual. “ Got in the tropics. Eh ! Nine of them ! You must go straight to bed and have a nurse.”

As I was crawling back to my room, I met a well-known bishop from New York, whom I had seen several times, and after enquiring the cause of my slow and languid movements, he added :

“ I am feeling ill myself ; this elevation is very trying, and my heart is troubling me a good deal.”

A few more words, and he passed on into his room, and I into mine, which chanced to be the next.

I did not have a nurse, because in Mexico they are difficult to get, and therefore, in an hotel, are looked upon with such awe it is almost impossible to arrange for one ; but I stayed partly in bed, and partly in a cane arm-chair, with my feet on another—a comfortable sofa is unknown in a hotel—and tried to bear complacently the throbbing pain of those nine bites, now swollen into two solid masses ! I could hardly crawl to the bell, and when I did, no one came, at least, not for half an hour or so, and then only a *mozo* (man), for women servants are non-existent in Mexican hotels. I ordered “ hot chicken,” which arrived in a tepid condition, the salt was forgotten, and the potatoes were cold. Altogether life did not look cheerful.

The whole of the following day people were rushing in and out of the next room, which was occupied by the learned divine. The walls were thin, and I could hear distinctly all that passed. There was soon no more to hear, for alas! that evening the poor gentleman died, just twenty-eight hours after we had talked on the balcony!

The event came as an awful shock, I own, and when all the fuss attendant on death was over—by law every corpse has to be buried within twenty-four hours in Mexico—and they locked the door that night, there seemed something horrible in the intense stillness which succeeded to all the bustle and confusion. Did I sleep? No, not much, the horror of my plight, the pain of those bites, despite the application of a freezing mixture every hour to my lower limbs—my own temperature being somewhere about 104° Fahr. — the terrible, terrible loneliness I felt with no one to come near but a Spaniard, who smelt of garlic and spoke and understood nothing but his own tongue—well, I could only again say with *Punch*, “DON’T!”

Many of my English and American friends had influenza at the time, and were unable to call, although two ladies were most thoughtful, sleeping in my sitting-room at night in turn when I was at my worst; others sent or brought me fresh butter—a real luxury—and little rolls, books, fruit and flowers. But kind as my Mexican friends were to me, hospitable and considerate as I invariably found them, they somehow never seemed to fully realise the awfulness of my fate. They left cards to enquire, or sent flowers, but I felt utterly wretched. Tied by the leg—by two legs, in fact—unable to stand for a second, practically alone in a great gaunt hotel, where the food had to be brought from a restaurant several minutes’ walk away—although in the same building—and was consequently cold and unappetising, the whole thing seemed simply

horrible! For fifteen days I suffered agonies from those bites, and for ten of those terrible days I never put my foot out of bed; it was by a miracle I escaped more severe blood-poisoning.

Freezing mixture and whisky was my prescription, and I who had rarely tasted whisky, was expected to drink it by the tumbler, as an antidote to the poison.

A guardian angel came to me at last, however, in the guise of an old friend, Lady Pearson, just arrived from England with Sir Weetman, who was on an inspection trip of his work in Mexico. She bore me off to her lovely house in Alvarado when I was well enough to be moved. I was carried upstairs and put to bed, where she fed me with dainties and generally looked after me. No words can ever sufficiently thank her for her kindness in my hour of need; the comforts of a home, even the luxury of a good bed and soft pillows, of thin cups and saucers, and dainty linen, combined to quickly set me on the road to recovery.

“All’s well that ends well,” and I can afford to laugh about my illness now, but it was a gruesome experience, and made me realise the madness of travelling alone so far from home. Yet, after all, I had already been over six months on the tramp, had slept in about fifty different beds, had spent some twenty nights in railway cars, and travelled thousands of miles, with never a day’s illness; but until I reached Mexico City I had practically never been in a hotel, or alone, and then—this is what befell me!

If any reader ever have a friend, or should hear of a foreigner who is ill, in a strange land, let him hasten to his side, to talk to him, cheer him up, to perform his little commissions, to take him soup or jelly, even to boil the kettle for a hot-water bottle, to do anything, in fact, rather than leave a sick man or woman alone in an unknown hotel, in a land far from his own.

If my disease were not caused by tropical bites—and there was some little doubt about the matter—it must have been due to poisoned ivy. This latter is very dangerous in tropical lands. The parasite in hot climates grows rank, generally in damp shady barrancas, where it spreads prolifically. It has long, thick, dark-green leaves, and is most poisonous when in bloom ; then the pollen flies, and any one may be poisoned without even touching the plant, when two or three feet away, in fact, if they are susceptible. Many persons are susceptible, even among the Indians, who live in constant dread of approaching the creeper, while others appear to enjoy immunity from its effects. Natives dread the devil, yellow fever, and poisonous ivy !

The poison raises large lumps, red and swollen like bites ; pus forms, and a kind of blood poisoning, attended by pain and danger, sets in.

While I was still ill, although on the high road to recovery, Sir Weetman and Lady Pearson started for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. She and her daughter returned to Mexico about three weeks later ; but he and his son, managers, engineers and Members of the Government remained to further inspect the line and attend to business. I had unfortunately missed the first trip across the Isthmus with Lady Pearson, but was luckily well enough to meet the rest of the party down the river, and see the new railway. On steamers and special trains it is not necessary to walk, and by that time I could manage to crawl about again. The ensuing time spent on a deck chair on those wonderful rivers soon made me feel stronger.

The Isthmus Railway, and its immense possibilities, its chance of revolutionising the carrying trade between the East and West, are dealt with in the next chapter.

The railway line to Vera Cruz was the first opened in Mexico, its object being to connect the capital with the coast. Like the Inter-Oceanic, this route runs through

some of the chief maguey fields. Train loads of pulque are brought into Mexico every morning, five hundred thousand litres being drunk daily in the city of Mexico alone!

Mr. Thomas Braniff, President of the Mexican Railway, kindly lent me his own car, and after being seen off by several friends, I travelled to Vera Cruz in company with Mr. Colls, who had been for several years in Mexico, but having married the only daughter of Edward Terry, the actor, now lives in England.

It is a splendid journey. The line is often on a four per cent. grade, and swings round endless curves as it descends some ten thousand feet to Vera Cruz. The beautiful part begins at Esperanza, and from thence to Orizaba—famous for its domes—it is perfectly lovely. There are endless tunnels and high bridges, and so sharply does the route curve that the coaches have to lie right over to get round at all. The succeeding curve is often in the opposite direction, in which event over sways the car again on the other side, see-saw fashion, until one gets quite giddy looking over the sides of precipices sheer down seven hundred to a thousand feet. This line, although the first built in Mexico, remains the finest bit of engineering to-day, and the honour of construction belongs to Englishmen!

Wheat is grown along the route, particularly near the famous pyramids of the Sun and Moon. The stacks of straw are somewhat peculiar, and one can easily guess the prevailing wind of the district by their shape. This resembles a china cheese dish of wedge-like form; where the wind is strongest it is finest, getting bigger and taller every foot, until it ends in an abrupt wall, and viewed from that point might be an ordinary English hay-rick. By this ingenious arrangement the straw is not blown away, the force of the wind being broken by its gentle incline.

The cañon is not so wild as at Tomellin, it is not so tropical, perhaps, as Tampico, but it is assuredly grand. Truly wonderful scenery is to be met with in Mexico.

When we left the City at 7 a.m. in the beginning of March, there was frost on the ground, but six hours later we were in the heat of the tropics!

Again one repeats, 'tis the land of extremes of every kind. As we descended lower we left the pines and magueys and reached bananas sheltering coffee, likewise cotton and sugar; adobe houses disappeared, and their places were taken by bamboo huts. The children ran about clothed in nature's garb; orchids and hanging mosses clung to the trees, and all was tropical again. What a magnificent view met our admiring gaze of the snow-capped volcano of Orizaba!

Surely nothing in the world can be grander than some of those Mexican scenes; the Himalayas are higher, it is true, than those extinct volcanoes—the Alps are more numerous, the Andes perhaps more rugged; but where else does one get such marvellous pictures? Below, a river with alligators and terrapins in the water; parrots and monkeys overhead; wild tropical tangled jungle on the banks; bamboo, cocoanut or plantain, then the more rugged rocky peaks, and towering away into that wonderful sky those great, snow-clad volcanoes.

I spent one night in Vera Cruz—a town of some size, but without a single cab!—and was off next morning at 5 a.m., ere break of day. Somehow one always seems to be starting off somewhere before daybreak in Mexico. To be up with the stars, and away in the dark, is quite a usual mode of procedure; but one learns by experience that it is worth while to avoid the great heat of the day whenever possible.

There is a small branch line to Alvarado further south

on the Gulf, and—another of the strange anomalies of Mexico—the engine has an electric head-light! It seems incongruous to find the latest modern improvements in such an ancient, far-away land!

Fate ordained that I should see the Republic almost entirely under the guidance and escort of men. I had numberless companions, but they were always men. The reader may ask why, and the question is not hard to answer. It is simply due to the fact that no Mexican woman has the slightest idea how to "rough it." There are comparatively few English or American women in Mexico, and those there are often have to leave their husbands for other climes in summer; added to which the officials everywhere are of course men, and it was practically the officials who showed me Mexico! They were delightful; anything more considerate, more courteous, more kindly than the behaviour of those men of all nationalities to me, a stranger, could not possibly be imagined, and from the bottom of my heart I thank them one and all for their kindly aid, and unfailing and thoughtful help during my 185 days' sojourn in the Republic.

We left Vera Cruz in a special train, every mile of the line to Alvarado becoming more and more tropical. The glorious fan-like bamboos were missing, but the palms and cocoa-nuts, the bananas and mangoes were there. Strange round objects on trees, resembling ships' buffers, attracted my attention.

"What are they?" I asked.

"Hornets' nests," was the cheerful reply.

There were hundreds of them. What charming things to disturb! Egrets flew overhead, and when we reached the lagoon, we saw thousands of buzzards along the water's edge, tall, black, and forbidding, waiting for their carrion prey.

My companions on this occasion were three men, J.

Fletcher Toomer, General Manager of the Vera Cruz (Mexico) Railway, Limited; Arthur Colls, Secretary, and Arthur J. Philbrick, Traffic Manager, Navigation Department.

It is a pretty line, and I was amused to see the simple native folk making starch from yucca root, which grows freely in sand dunes. The root is soaked in large tubs or troughs, under bamboo shelters, and subsequently ground by hand, generally by the aid of rollers. By this means a thick white fluid is extracted, which is spread in troughs, and exposed to the sun in order to let the water evaporate. A glutinous residue is left, yellow-brown in colour, and as thick as molasses; this is afterwards exposed on the rush mats of the country to bleach; it turns into flakes, and is then fit to sell. There is a large industry in starch among the Indians.

Perhaps those sand dunes may in the future develop into golf links where the Indians of Alvarado will play! Meantime the quaint little town is famous for tarpon and oysters.

Our original plans having been slightly changed, we reached our destination a day sooner than expected. It is terrible to arrive a day too soon anywhere, because things are not always ready. The river San Juan is navigable to the town of that name from Alvarado, nearly two hundred miles, and a big steamer runs as far as San Nicolas, nearly half the distance. This steamer had been painted for the occasion; but as we arrived a day too early, the black paint of the floor, and the white paint of the walls were not quite dry, consequently we stuck above and below, and round the corners! Quite an ocean boat with cabins and comforts; but she could only go as far as San Nicolas, where we were to change into a smaller craft. This little steamer, with its flat bottom and hind wheel, was still being carpentered. We, a party of four were to meet

Sir Weetman Pearson and eleven companions at San Juan on their way back from Tehuantepec, and as we were all, moreover, to live eighteen hours on board the smaller vessel, on the return trip, a top roof had been added, and further kitchen arrangements made, so she was not quite ready. We took her in tow, with fourteen carpenters on board, who finished their work by the way. Rather amusing to build one's house as one goes along, and that on the water, too, but such was actually the case.

What a transfer of goods! Our special train from Vera Cruz was composed of an engine, a luggage van, and the directors' car, with cooks, butlers, and food for ten days. The things came on board; sixteen trestle beds and bedding, wine and spirits, chairs and tables, food and cutlery, pots and pans, everything and anything likely to be needed by our small army of fifteen men and one woman!

But the greatest trouble of all was the ice-chest, a thing weighing a ton, full of chickens, fish and eatables generally. A dozen men were required to get it on to the boat, and being natives, they insisted on doing it their own way. Such a funny way, too! They had rollers, but instead of running and putting the roller down again in front of the chest to keep the thing going, they would wait and think about it, let the box drop down on its front edge, and then have all the toil of lifting the end up again! So thoroughly Mexican! We had a lovely twenty-four hours on that large steamer, and I a four-berthed cabin to myself, which gives some idea of the size of these five navigable rivers of Southern Mexico.

In about three hours we reached Tlalcotalpam, quite a flourishing town where, with ordinary boats, a number of passengers generally land or come on board. Those great rivers running up from the Isthmus, convey imported goods to the haciendas, and bring back coffee, tobacco, beans, log-wood, cedar, fustic (for dye), cotton, rubber,

cattle, and all manner of tropical fruits. Small villages are springing up along the banks, since the steamship line was inaugurated.

The rivers are at their lowest in March, just before the rains begin, so we had chosen a bad time; there is sometimes a difficulty in getting up the two hundred miles. They are splendidly wide, but three feet is considered a good depth of water in the higher reaches. We arrived at the end of our big boat journey at night, and the carpenters manfully struggled on with candles (round which thousands of moths hovered), and succeeded in finishing the little steamer ready for morning. There was a terrible mist at San Nicolas; all was hazy obscurity as we left our large vessel at six a.m. and walked along a plank into the smaller craft. An excellent hot breakfast, however, put us in good humour, and by nine o'clock the sun came out to further cheer our hearts.

As the mist rose and the warmth increased, we saw turtle swimming in the water, and alligators basking in the sun. There are many less of the latter than formerly, as an American company is doing its best to exterminate them for the sake of their skins. What a picturesque trip it was! Indians were plying hither and thither in the streams in their dug-out canoes. Boys and men were coming down to the water's edge to fill their large jugs. Each piece of pottery must have been three times the size of an ordinary pail, and, when filled, really heavy, yet the natives carry them on their shoulders supported by one or both hands. After rolling up their white trousers they would walk into the stream, fill their bowl, and then dragging it to the water's edge, by some clever trick bend one knee, lift the weight on to that limb, and, after but a moment's pause, twist it up on to the shoulder, where a piece of sacking or coarse stuff was already reposing to receive it. Such a lazy, contented, happy, animal sort of existence was all very Indian, tropical and interesting. As the day crept on

the heat increased, and then we sought refreshment by drinking the fresh milk of the unripened cocoa-nut. Who has not read the stirring tales of Marryat and Ballantyne in youth, and learned the joys that fresh milk affords the thirsty traveller? We were not working hard, as did the heroes of those thrilling romances; we were merely basking in tropical sunshine, on a river steamer, with a flat bottom and a funny little paddle behind, like the famous Mississippi boats, and yet we all thoroughly appreciated that fresh milk! The cocoa-nut was green. Cutting off the top as one would an egg, one discovered a white woolly lining one-and-a-half inches thick. This would later have been fibrous and useful for mat-making. After cutting off the end, the milk was revealed. Three tumblers of perfectly clear water, with a deliciously refreshing taste, though in no way flavoured with cocoa-nut. A thin brown coating was beginning to adhere to the shell, and shortly, if it had been left, the actual part which we call cocoa-nut would have fastened to these edges as it formed itself out of the liquid. The cocoa-nut rind was not yet set, and therefore the entire shell was full of fluid. It was an ideal drink, improved—the men declared—by a spoonful of gin, not enough to disguise the milk, but to bring out its flavour. A cocoa-nut bears at seven years of age, and its life is about ten times that length.

The turtles—or more properly speaking, terrapins, for we were on fresh water—amused me. I had never seen live turtles before, except at the famous “Ship and Turtle,” in the City of London, where they swim about in tanks; although I had eaten them in soup at the Mansion House, sitting next to a Lord Mayor! Here they were on their native heath—as an Irishman might say—and very happy they looked. The Indians catch them in nets or creels, something like lobster pots; stew and eat them in lumps, for the alderman’s soup is unknown to Mexico!

Then there were the alligators—dozens, one might almost say hundreds, of them. As we approached they were lying on the banks, basking in the sun—grey-looking objects that might have been the trunks of trees, they were so muddy. Six or ten feet long seemed to be the average size, and one distinguished them from afar because their heads were always pointed upwards.

“I will photograph one,” said I, and accordingly the camera was unearthed and I made my preparations. Up till then we had seen them every few minutes ; now that all was ready for the fray not one appeared for more than an hour, and even when they did eventually emerge, it was impossible to take them properly. They are shy, and as they lay half asleep they heard the rattle of our engines in the water, and with a start of surprise and fear, promptly walked off and were lost to view. Alligators “at home” do not crawl, as I always imagined they did ; they get right up on their little legs, and, head in air, march along quite briskly. Their legs are like those of a dachshund, bent and bowed, but they can almost run ! Alas, out of half-a-dozen snap-shots none were really distinct. The northern half of Mexico afforded splendid photographs, the air was so clear, dry and sunny ; the shadows deep, the lights brilliant—but in the tropics there is a moisture in the air which gives a hazy look to the plates.

Parrots flew overhead, green as usual, and always in couples. One never sees a solitary parrot ; they are birds that seem to like company, and prefer to screech in pairs. Perhaps parrots gossip, and therefore meet in couples to wreck their neighbours’ reputations.

Navigation in a low state of the river, and going against the stream, becomes exciting at times. Our flat-bottomed steamer was like a Thames house-boat, and when the water grew shallow a man at each side stood in front, pole in hand. Rings were painted in various colours a foot apart on these



Alligators on banks of tropical rivers.



Indian dug-out canoe, 150 years old ; River San Juan, Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

poles, and when the captain or pilot called out to take soundings, these men dipped their poles, and cried :—

Dos y medio	.	.	.	.	two-and-a-half feet.
Dos escasos	.	.	.	.	two short.
Dos largos	.	.	.	.	two and a bit.
Fondo blando	.	.	.	.	soft bottom.
Fondo duro	.	.	.	.	hard bottom.

They almost sing these soundings, which so quickly follow suit ; they only turn the big pole over in the hand and dip it in again. In the silence of a tropical evening, that song was charming. We got along quite happily in a couple of feet of water ; in parts the river was quite deep, but when it became shallower than twenty-four inches, or we ran on to a sand-bank, trouble ensued.

Sand-banks in places were common, despite the width of the river, and several times we were firmly caught. When this occurred, down got the captain, out came the pilot, and into the water both stepped, pole in hand, to find the best way off or over. They wore no shoes, and apparently wet trousers did not signify, for they waded about cheerfully in the stream until they found what they wanted. At other times, at some sharp bend where the current was strong, we were swung round on to a bank and got hooked up among the over-hanging trees. Then our two " sounding " men produced long poles with forks at the end, and with all their might and main shoved us off. We had no real mishaps, because our only troubles were the shallows, and there if things went very wrong one could always get off and walk ashore ! So long as daylight lasted we steamed, but in spite of a glorious moon we could not do so at night owing to the constantly shifting hidden sand-banks, and trunks of hidden trees called " snags " in our course, to say nothing of the strength of the current.

We once drew up near a small native village about 7 p.m., to await the dawn of morning. Of course, all

the inhabitants came down to view us, and squatted on their heels on the bank to watch us enjoying our dinner. What amused them most? Why, our knives and forks. They had never seen anything so remarkable. *They* shovel in their food—if they are rich enough to have any—with bits of tortillas, and that people should use a fork instead of a piece of corn-cake, or that each person should have a knife to himself was, they thought, extraordinary.

Dinner over, the excitement of the camp began. Our upper deck was exactly like the top of a Thames house-boat (there were no cabins anywhere), excepting that we had two or three plies of canvas roof to keep out the sun. Canvas walls were let down at the sides, as far as the bulwarks, and one end was partitioned off by a canvas screen for me.

This was my chamber; a trestle bed, some blankets, pillows, chair, and a tin tripod wash-handstand—which I handed out for the use of others when done with—completed my furniture, but the little room was quite comfortable. On the other side of the canvas sheet my three companions slept, while beyond, the captain and pilot twisted themselves into balls in the very small wheel-house, and below, the chef and butlers sought repose amid wine cases and cutlery. The Indian crew and underlings took their *petate* (grass mats), and, spreading them on the bank, rolled their heads up in their blankets and went to sleep, leaving the lower part of their bodies perfectly bare. There were no mosquitoes, nothing to disturb our peace. “Lights out” rang forth about ten o’clock; but it was just as bright without them, for the moon shone vividly and the stars twinkled merrily.

“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,” dear old rhyme of our youth, came back to me, as clearly and distinctly as though it had been learnt but yesterday. Ah, those baby verses were memorised when the slate of the mind was fresh and

clean ; its impression—like many impressions of one's youth—seems indelible. As years roll by the slate becomes crowded with manifold subjects, until some memories have to be sponged off to make room for newer impressions, and the last inscriptions become hazy and blurred. If only we could keep our slates clean through life, the tangled threads of memory would not get so confused.

The night was calm and still ; the heat of a tropical day had passed, and hour by hour it grew colder and colder until the miasma of early morning rose from the river and hung over the banks. By 4 a.m. we were enveloped in a thick fog. Three blankets were not enough then, even a fourth could not keep out the insidious damp, for the bed-clothes became quite sodden. I put up my hand to my hair—it was as wet as though I had just washed it ; but then I was practically sleeping in the open—a roof of canvas over my head and a screen of canvas around were of no avail against mist which penetrated everywhere ; I was wet through. It was not for long, however ; a couple of hours later, with its first lifting, we started off again, and then the warmth of the sun soon cleared it away. By nine o'clock we were back in all the heat of another tropical day, which was not overpowering by any means, for we were moving and making a breeze as we swung round the banks of the winding river.

Dressing was rather a funny entertainment, for the fog still hung around, clothes felt cold and clammy ; but, when one is happy, dreams of malaria do not trouble the mind, and yellow fever germs had been left behind on the coast.

It seemed strange to see shoeless sailors all wearing beautifully coloured scarves, smoking cigars—good cigars, too, with a delicious aroma ; but then we were in the land of tobacco, where cigars could be purchased at the modest cost of three or four a penny ! They smoke a great deal,

those dark-skinned Indians, some of whom are splendid-looking men. The type was often Jewish, but they were all big and brawny with curly hair—not woolly or frizzy, on the contrary, wavy and silky—and such glorious eyes! They were just the folk to sit as artists' models, and the touch of colour at their throats added a charm to the picture. They were of the Zapotec tribe, descendants of the people who built Mitla.

My companions—my three chaperons, as I called them—dressed in white (shoes, coat, trousers and hat), looked like Indian officers in their tropical cleanliness. Why is it, I wonder, that this sort of attire is so becoming? Flannels, ducks, or *negligé* of any kind invariably suit a man, though perhaps he never looks such a “gentleman” as in that most hideous but refining of costumes, dress clothes.

Three days we spent on the river—three happy, indolent days, basking in the sunshine, and letting the tropical vegetation, flowers, foliage and animal life, sink into our very souls. It was all so restful, so interesting, so reminiscent of Robinson Crusoe. Here were the jungled forests, with the creepers and parasites hanging from the boughs of the trees and re-planting themselves in the earth. Seek where one would, one could find no admittance from the banks; it was all thick, impenetrable jungle. But behind it tigers roamed, and a taper peered upon us from a bough; beneath heavy undergrowth snakes, three yards long, were quietly crawling.

The real primeval forest is a very different thing from the pictures we see in story-books. I remember once sitting next to H. M. Stanley (now Sir Henry), of “Darkest Africa” fame, at a Society of Authors’ dinner, when the conversation turned on the subject of primeval forests. Mr. Stanley, usually a silent personage, on this occasion—perhaps the result of a little anxiety concerning the speech he was expected to make later in the evening,

and which he did admirably—proved talkative. One of his remarks I well remember.

“A primeval forest,” said he, “is an impenetrable wall, which man’s skill and pluck are sorely tried to enter.”

These words came back to me on the Isthmus. Verily an impenetrable wall. The undergrowth—six, eight, or perhaps ten feet high—was so close, so jumbled, so interwoven that no human being could find space to stand. A lofty palm here, a bamboo there, an orchid or a mistletoe clinging to that cedar or mahogany tree, while graceful tendrils descended from the boughs and took root in the ground below. All things grew so thickly together that it seemed impossible they could find room even to take root; but they did, and every variety of vegetation appeared to thrive. This underwood is not so difficult to clear as might be imagined; it is simply ignited and burnt. In the hot season everything is dry, and whole spaces are easily cleared. No one could go into that jungle and cut it down! In the first place they could not get in, in the second it is the home of snakes and lizards, scorpions and reptiles of all sorts, to say nothing of larger animals and venomous mosquitoes; however, firing is comparatively easy, and can to a great extent be guided and controlled. The ash forms a manure, and a year later crops may be raised on what but a few months previously was primeval forest!

There were lovely green lizards (*Iguana*) about eighteen inches to two feet long crawling up the banks, and later I tasted one of them and found it excellent. The natives will not eat ducks; they consider they are filthy-living animals, while these lizards, on the contrary, are clean and thought a great luxury, as, indeed, is correct, for they taste like chicken.

Towards sunset on the third day of our trip we neared San Juan, the little native town which was our goal; but

there is "many a slip," as we all know, and about a mile away we stuck ignominiously on a sand-bank! Yes, we stuck, and stuck hard and fast, too, and for an hour or more it seemed as if we were unlikely ever to move again. Signals of distress went up; we whistled and whistled again, till finally one of those large picturesque barges or "dug-out" canoes, which do so much of the carrying trade of the rivers, came to our rescue. It was said to be one hundred and fifty years old, and was cut out of three long tree trunks joined together, pointing upwards at each end. A part of the deck was covered in with bamboo matting; but the heat of travelling slowly, and low down towards the water, must have been terrible for passengers before steamers were introduced. This canoe relieved us of our ice-chest and wine-cases, of all the heavy things, in fact. Then some thirty Indians, in nature's garb, descended into the water and pulled with their hands or pushed with their legs, making a prise or lever with poles, by means of which they endeavoured to move the sand beneath our craft, some of them working chains backwards and forwards also with a view to accomplishing that object. For three hours, in the gloam of evening, they worked, perspiring at every pore, and eventually got us off. I had enjoyed it all, for the moon was radiant, a beautiful tropical moon, the evening warm, the scene quite lovely, and the dark figures most picturesque.

The men worked to a sort of tune which reminded me strangely of other scenes, thousands of miles away; for when I christened the "P. and O." steamer "Assaye" on the Clyde a few months previously the men dug her out of her cradle to much the same time and music. Poor Indians, theirs was the longer and tougher job, for they had no modern improvements, no greased "permanent ways," and the tide was rolling the sand more and more against our flat-bottomed craft every moment.

Suddenly a yell of triumph pierced the air, a joyful "She's off" rang forth in many Indian dialects, and away we steamed, about nine p.m., to the little town the lights of which we had seen dimly flickering for hours!

A "special," composed of an engine and Sir Weetman Pearson's own private car, had been sent up for us, and five minutes after landing we were steaming away through the stillness of the night, along the newly opened Juile Line to join the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Railway, where we were to meet a party of "men, men, nothing but men!"

Was it not the famous Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who, when asked by someone whether she liked books, replied: "Books! Prithee do not talk to me of books! The only books I know are men and cards."

She would indeed have been in her element in Mexico!

We travelled all night, reaching Coatzacoalcos, the following morning, where we joined Sir Weetman Pearson's party, which consisted of General Mena, Minister of Communications, and formerly Mexican Minister in London and Paris; Julio M. Limantour, brother of the Minister of Finance; Carlos de Landa y Escandon; Augustine Schulze, nephew of the famous General Rincorn; J. B. Body, Managing Director of the Tehuantepec Railway; Harold Pearson (my host's son); H. H. Crabtree; E. Sayer; Miguel Palacios, and others.

What a beautiful spot Coatzacoalcos is! Unfortunately, I was not able to see much of it, for a "norther" had sprung up, and a norther invariably absorbs one's whole attention, and does not leave room for much else.

Mrs. Mellor, a lady from Jamaica, invited me to luncheon, which was quite a remarkable meal. I was helped to something of a fishy nature, and the moment I tasted it exclaimed:

"Surely this is Norwegian fish-pudding!"

"Yes," replied my hostess, "but how do you know that?"

“ Because I have eaten it sitting beside Dr. Nansen and Björnstjerne Björnson in Norway ; but how on earth did you get it in the tropics ? ”

“ By means of tins ; everything comes here in tins ! ”

How little we home folk appreciate the possibilities of tins. Later on we had a most excellent plum-pudding, my Christmas pudding served in the tropics in March ; tinned again. They are sent out in thousands from England to all parts of the world, and eaten in the tropics with sunbeams and monkeys peeping in at the windows, a reminder of Christmas amid snow and ice ! Canning—as our American friends call it—has reached wonderful perfection, and in places like Mexico, where one lives to a great extent on tinned foods, one learns their value and realises how good they invariably are. Added to which, after seeing the cleanliness of their preparation in a place like Chicago, one gladly welcomes anything so sweet, wholesome and palatable.

What a lot of things one learns by travelling !

Touchstone says :—

“ When I was at home I was in a better place,
But travellers must be content.”

Surely the one makes us appreciate the other !



A Tehuantepec girl, with her "Huipil" (head-gear).

CHAPTER XXV.

THE Isthmus of Tehuantepec.*

PROPHECY often works out its own fulfilment.

When in 1519 Cortés arrived from Spain to conquer Mexico, he landed at Vera Cruz; but that harbour being considered dangerous, he had the coast surveyed for sixty leagues further south, as far, indeed, as the Coatzacoalcos river, which was finally decided upon as affording suitable anchorage. Here a fort was built during the following year, and a colony settled under Velasquez de Leon. Nearly four hundred years later this chosen spot promises to become one of the most important seaports in the world.

From a letter written to Charles V. of Spain, it appears that Cortés was most anxious to find a Strait which would naturally unite the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. He saw the immense importance of a direct route between those vast seas. In vain he sought some natural channel; but finding none, and still realising the necessity of a connection for the purposes of trade, he conceived the idea of a carriage road, by means of which to supply Spain with spices from the East Indies, and return exports from Europe to the Western hemisphere. Strong in his belief of the ultimate importance of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Cortés selected tracts of land on the Coatzacoalcos river,

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inland towards Oaxaca and Mitla, and further west towards the town of Tehuantepec near the Pacific coast, which tracts were finally conferred on him by grants from Charles V. This far-seeing Spanish conqueror succeeded even in those days to work mines on his property at considerable profit —Oaxaca still being famous for its production of ore although not so much mining is done on the Isthmus now as formerly. History also asserts that the first gold to excite the greed of Spain was obtained by the conquerors at Chinamoca near Coatzacoalcos. To-day, however, agriculture is the great wealth of the Tehuantepec country. Petroleum has also lately been found there, which it is proposed to use in the locomotives; for a daily passenger train is now running across the Isthmus, to say nothing of freight trains.

Humboldt, three hundred years after Cortés, saw the enormous possibilities of the Tehuantepec Isthmus route between the East and the West, speaking of it as the "Bridge of the World's commerce," and to-day the prophecies of these two men are becoming realities; for the Isthmus of Tehuantepec promises to revolutionise the traffic of the Eastern and Western hemispheres.

Trade is ever increasing in the world. People grow more luxurious with every decade. The working classes now enjoy their tea from China and Ceylon, their sugar from the West Indies, their tobacco from Havannah, their grain from Russia or the United States, and their spices from the East Indies. What does this mean? Simply, every year more and more export and import, more and more interchange of goods. Over the whole world, in fact, traffic is increasing, and the shortest and cheapest routes naturally attract most custom.

No trade caravans could face the vast deserts, or the wild Indians in the far north-west, therefore a shorter and

more southern route for commerce became a necessity. A cart road, as suggested by Cortés, was accordingly made across the Isthmus, and coaches ran from Minatitlan to Salina Cruz on the Pacific, carrying the miners and settlers who flocked to California over fifty years ago when gold was first discovered there. Later arose the idea of constructing a railway for ships to be dragged across ; a canal was also proposed. No ship railway has as yet been constructed anywhere ; but some years back the idea of conveying vessels across narrow necks of land, by means of innumerable trucks running on several parallel lines of rail, was much discussed by engineers. The project took definite shape about twelve years ago, when one was partly made between Canada and Nova Scotia with the object of saving the detour round the latter. Financial troubles overtook the company, and the scheme was abandoned.

The Government of Mexico finally conceived the plan of making a railway across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and in 1895 finished the line. Unfortunately they did not then realise that it was of little use running a railway from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coast unless they also provided suitable harbours where large ships could enter at all times. This railway, however, proved the first step towards success. General Diaz, assisted by his ministers, found that important harbours at both ends were necessary ; but Government required co-operation in so great an enterprise. They realised the necessity of spending money on the ports ; but they also felt the working of the entire scheme would have a better chance in private hands, than if undertaken solely by Government.

At that time Sir Weetman Pearson—head of the firm of S. Pearson and Son—was already building the harbour at Vera Cruz, which wonderful piece of engineering I saw

almost completed in March, 1901. He had also made the Drainage Canal in the valley of Mexico City for the Government, and saw great possibilities in the Tehuantepec scheme. As the result of many conferences, the Government of Mexico and Sir Weetman Pearson agreed to become partners for a term of fifty years, in the gigantic project of working the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Railway and building harbours at Coatzacoalcos on the Mexican Gulf and Salina Cruz on the Pacific.

It was arranged that fine deep-water ports should be constructed at both ends of the ocean-to-ocean railway. These ports—which will probably cost three millions sterling—are to be paid for by the Government and built by Pearson and Son. The Government, which has already spent nearly four millions sterling on the railway, agreed to spend half a million more, and there the Mexican obligations end. Pearson and Son become their partners, and are allowed a free hand, so that this huge undertaking may be run upon business lines. The Government is to be congratulated upon its prescience in having arranged that a commercial enterprise of international importance should not be weighted by departmental control in its every-day working. Below is a *résumé* of the agreement.

The maximum rates for traffic are to be: Passenger, first-class, four cents; second-class, three cents; third-class, two cents; merchandise per metric ton, from three cents for sixth-class to eight cents for first-class. Rates on domestic merchandise shall be differential and on a decreasing scale. The distribution of the merchandise among the six classes shall be effected, in concert with the Department of Communications and Public Works, every three years. Cereals shall be always counted in the third-class, rails and such like shall enjoy a rebate of thirty per cent. from the third-class rate; the charge for coal will be one-and-a-half cents per ton per kilometre if in carload lots and destined for consumption in Mexico. The Government shall have a rebate for the transportation of coal, troops, immigrants, etc. Mails are to be carried free.

Rates for telegrams shall be, for every ten words sent 100 kilometres, fifteen cents.

At the ports of Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz, the Government charge will be for pilotage and sanitary dues one-half of the lowest rate at Vera Cruz or Tampico; for wharfage twenty-five cents a ton; and also a transit due of forty cents per ton of merchandise, or per passenger.

The company, within the maximum tariff given, have the right to fix the rate on all through traffic.

No consular invoices are required for merchandise transported over the railway to be re-shipped. Merchandise will not be subject to Custom House examination unless it be destined for consumption in Mexico. No passports will be required of persons in transit.

The company may organise a Navigation Company to work in conjunction with the railway, in the Pacific, and also in the Atlantic.

Vessels belonging to the maritime service shall enjoy a twenty-five per cent. reduction in sanitary and pilotage dues and fifty per cent. in other dues in other ports of the Republic.

The Government may avail itself of the ships of the company, in case of war, on payment of a monthly remuneration.

If it is necessary to extend the railway or ports, the company can borrow money, offering as security the proceeds of the railway and ports.

When the contract is ended, any bonds that may have been so issued shall be redeemed by the Government, unless the Government decides to take upon itself the obligations connected with said bonds and debt. From the other securities belonging to the company, the Government and the company shall be paid for the capital invested, and the surplus divided.

The Government binds itself not to grant during the period of this contract any concession for the operation of other railways or ports within fifty kilometres of these works, and it will not authorise railway lines, which now have the right to connect with the Tehuantepec Railway, to make special transit or through rates from the Gulf to the Pacific.

There is not much doubt that sooner or later the Nicaragua or Panama Canal will be made, not so much on account of necessity from a mercantile point of view, as from its being a political necessity for the United States Navy. The cost of any canal prohibits its completion as a private enterprise. It must be a Government work. Governments move slowly. Besides, the great railways stretching across the United States have interests that would be seriously affected if a canal were made, and they do not usually allow rapid legislation when such affects their purses. Hence it will probably be years before the matter is seriously taken in hand by the Executive in Washington. Then it will probably require ten to fifteen years to construct before the first man-of-war will be able to sail through the canal, and Tehuantepec will still claim freight and passenger traffic, and remain a great commercial route.

As said previously, this new Tehuantepec route is likely to revolutionise the carrying trade between the East and West, most of which hitherto has been carried in the North by the Southern Pacific Railway, but even apart from taking any of that, commerce is increasing so rapidly, the new route is sure to get its full share of freight. Meantime, the Panama Railway has long had a monopoly in the South. Its earnings must have been about £180,000 a year net, in spite of lack of port facilities and its often prohibitive rates. Speaking roughly, 1,500,000 tons annually is at present the average trans-continental trade carried by the Panama and United States Railways, and this trade is steadily increasing. The bulk of this trade is between the Eastern States and California ; but tea and silk from the Orient, with cotton as the return freight, is no inconsiderable traffic.

The Tehuantepec Railway will be ready to commence its carrying trade towards the end of 1902, long before Nicaragua can even be begun ! Apparently the route is looked upon as practical, for a Chinese ship arrived when we were at Tehuantepec, and insisted on discharging her cargo, although assured that the Isthmus route was not then ready to deal with heavy traffic. When completed every modern facility for the cheap and quick handling of freight will be provided.

The Tehuantepec Isthmus has several advantages : primarily it is the shorter route. This shortening of mileage is one of the dominating factors that ensures success. It may be well to mention here that Tehuantepec is 1,300 miles north of Panama and 800 miles north of Nicaragua, and has therefore reduced on the Pacific Ocean alone the distance between all Atlantic and Northern Pacific ports by those considerable figures, while on the Atlantic side the saving, though not so great, is also considerable.

The following table shows the gain in mileage between

certain points by the Tehuantepec Railway over the Panama route :—

	<i>Via</i> Panama.	<i>Via</i> Tehuantepec.	Gain of Mileage.
Plymouth to San Francisco	. 9,013	7,767	1,336
New York , ,	. 6,270	5,005	1,265
New Orleans to , ,	. 5,596	3,586	2,010
Liverpool to Yokohama	. 14,540	13,455	1,085
New York , ,	. 11,256	10,006	1,250
New Orleans , ,	. 10,611	8,637	1,974
New York and Manilla	. 12,602	11,563	1,039

To realise the distances it is well to remember that it is only about 3,000 miles from England to New York. From New Orleans *via* Tehuantepec to San Francisco is 2,000 miles less than by Panama, which is a saving of two-thirds of the distance from England to New York. Coatza-coalcos, which is the Atlantic terminus of the Tehuantepec route and 800 miles south of New Orleans, is, strange as it may seem, nearer to San Francisco by the new route than is New Orleans *via* the Southern Pacific Railway, which is the usual mode of travel.

The Tehuantepec Railway charge from ship's side to ship's side will, it is expected, not exceed sixteen shillings per ton, and the Pacific Ocean part of the journey to San Francisco will probably cost ten shillings a ton, making a total charge for freight of twenty-six shillings a ton from Coatzacoalcos, on the Gulf of Mexico, to San Francisco. The United States Railways charge about sixty shillings a ton, from ocean to ocean, which is only about a farthing a ton per mile. The Panama rates are, roughly speaking, twenty shillings a ton. If, therefore, the Tehuantepec route carries freight from ship's side to ship's side for sixteen shillings per ton, the saving to shippers over the Panama route will be fully four shillings a ton in railway freight alone, and from 1,265 to 2,010 miles sea freight on all North Pacific trade; whilst the saving over the all-rail freights will be thirty per cent., or one-third, of the price of the trans-continental lines.

The Tehuantepec route is undoubtedly the most important scheme in Mexico to-day, hence these details.

We had a special train for the inspection trip, and travelling under such circumstances is a luxury. First of all was an engine with its cow-catcher in front, and all the latest improvements. Then the servants' accommodation, followed by the kitchen, where the cooking had to be done for sixteen people requiring three meals a day, with a few extra guests thrown in, as generally two or three district engineers joined our family party. Then came the dining-room. This was not so luxurious as a Pullman, as it was only improvised for the occasion. What is called a box-car, that is to say, a shut-in van for freight, had been painted and done up, extra canvas roofs added, and windows knocked in at the sides. The result was excellent, for it allowed a long narrow table at which we could all sit with comfort, a rude sideboard at the end where cold viands for hungry men stood in rows, and plenty of room for the darkie porters to move about. Beyond this was another box-car, fitted up with bed-rooms, just like little cabins. It must be understood that the Tehuantepec line is from ocean to ocean, and it is therefore not joined by any other branch whatsoever, consequently every car or engine has to be brought by sea, or made on the Isthmus. In other places it would be quite easy to procure ordinary carriages and just run them along the already existing lines ; however, more resource and enterprise is required where such means of transport do not exist.

In these ingenious cabins the engineers of the party slept. Beyond was the drawing-room of the train, namely, Sir Weetman Pearson's own car. This had been brought by sea from Vera Cruz to Coatzacoalcos, and I understand great difficulty was experienced in getting such an enormous structure on to the deck of the ship !

Verily it was a charming abode. At the far end was the

Market baskets for sale.



Tehuantepec family.



observation drawing-room with its glass windows and balcony, over which fell a striped awning. The drawing-room at night was metamorphosised into a chamber with four beds, partitioned by curtains, in which Sir Weetman, General Mena and others slept, as they kindly gave me the state bedroom, quite a palatial little place with a brass bedstead and a bath !

The Mexicans of the party usually played cards every evening, for apparently the Mexican cannot live without this excitement, while Sir Weetman, surrounded by maps and charts, figures and facts, discussed millions of pounds or centavos of copper with his Staff.

Our train pulled up when necessary, that we might examine some culvert or bridge, or, when requisite, inspect a pit of ballast. At interesting places we stayed for hours, and over the less picturesque tracts sped on our way by night. This was the perfection of comfort while travelling, and I am afraid that I was spoilt in "Mexico as I saw it."

Tehuantepec is in the tropics. It lies in the most southern corner of Mexico, bordering on Yucatan, and is the narrowest point of land between the two great oceans. The Tehuantepec Railway, which is but one hundred and ninety miles long and the highest point of which only reaches seven hundred and fifty feet, runs due north and south ; at one end is Coatzacoalcos, at the other Salina Cruz, near the town of Tehuantepec. Coatzacoalcos, until lately, was little more than a village. It is beautifully situated at the mouth of a fine river of the same name, which runs into the Gulf of Mexico. This river is navigable for seventy miles, and at the town itself is a quarter of a mile broad, where it forms a fine natural harbour ; but, unfortunately, the bar has until now been a great obstacle, as only ships of limited draught—fifteen feet—could cross it.

All this is being changed. Jetties, nine hundred feet apart, on much the same principles as at Tampico, and at the mouth of the Mississippi, are now in course of construction ; which, by confining the water into a narrow space, will scour away the bar, and eventually allow large ocean vessels to enter at any season. These jetties will always maintain between thirty and forty feet of water in the channel. The new quays along the river banks are to be two-thirds of a mile long, so that eight large ships can discharge at the same time. Parts of these quays are already finished, and look most substantial and business-like. Fine offices are being erected at the back, and quite an important town seems likely to develop rapidly.

But, in the meantime, although it has doubled itself during the last two years—the population to-day being over five thousand—it is still a funny, primitive little place. Formerly, anyone who bought a piece of land built a house after his own idea, and the result of this want of system was naturally of an “anyhow” description. The streets were of sand without any attempt at paving or draining, and the little wooden houses most insanitary. The Government of Mexico, however, is rapidly altering all this, and also at the port of Salina Cruz on the Pacific Slope. They have acquired houses and land in both places, and are building entirely new towns, properly planned and thoroughly drained. They are also instituting splendid water supplies, so that Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz will, it is expected, shortly be exempt from yellow fever, and other tropical ills. Indeed, the Government is sparing neither pains nor money in making both towns thoroughly healthy, and, by starting on such scientific and sanitary lines, they are almost sure of success ; at all events they deserve it. I was on the Isthmus at the beginning of the hot season when yellow fever is at its

worst, but I only heard of three victims to that terrible scourge.

A movement is being made at the present moment to investigate yellow fever among other tropical diseases ; but Universities are always poor, and an opportunity awaits any wide-minded millionaire, who is willing to expend some thousands of pounds for the good of humanity. Such a generous act would benefit the whole human race, for yellow fever is one of the greatest scourges of the earth.

If once yellow fever were eradicated, hundreds of seaports in tropical lands would be opened to the world as desirable residential homes.

I was greatly struck with the country between the two coasts. Eight or ten feet of soil is common, and anything and everything seems to grow. On the Pacific Slope the climate is dry, but on the Gulf side it is wet. The Isthmus, for a tropical land, is considered healthy, by reason of the fresh current of air always blowing from one ocean to the other. Entering the town of Tehuantepec the railway runs through the chief street. This town, to which the Isthmus owes its name, is extremely picturesque. Strangers are almost unknown, and many quaint habits, customs, and costumes still remain. Strange to say, however, in this very un-up-to-date, far-away spot, "women's rights" are undisputed! Ninety per cent. of the trade is done by women, and a wife has to vouch for her husband before he can even get credit! Indeed, woman reigns supreme. The market-place presents a curious spectacle ; hardly a man is to be seen ; in fact, cutlery seems to be the only trade he is allowed to ply. Not only do the women predominate in business, but they prove beyond all doubt, that because a woman can earn a livelihood, it is not necessary for her to be either ugly or mis-shapen. On the contrary, the women of Tehuantepec are remarkable for

their beauty of face and form. Dark-skinned with glorious soft eyes and masses of wavy black hair, they possess exquisite features and lovely teeth. They are the most beautiful women in Mexico, and their carriage at once attracts attention. Small in stature, they are fine in limb ; in fact, the girls of Tehuantepec seem born models for an artist.

A ball in the market-place at Tehuantepec town is a wonderful sight. The women wear a quaint head-dress, called huepil, which is composed of coarse white lace, and can be utilised in three different ways. At a dance it is wound about the neck and stands out all round like a huge Elizabethan ruff. In church it is put on the head, something like a Boulogne fishwife's cap, only that it is larger, while for ordinary wear the huepil is simply laid on the hair, and folds of lace hang down the back. It seems a curious form of head-dress to a stranger, but is nevertheless becoming, although it affords little or no protection from the sun.

The feet of the richest Tehuanatepecana are invariably bare, even at a ball ; but she makes up in jewellery for what she omits in foot covering, and her chains, rich gems, gold and silver ornaments are marvellous to behold. On such occasions the wealthy ladies wear the huepil made of gold lace.

These olive-skinned queens of the tropics are indeed beautiful. They are full of grace, and dance exceedingly well.

A short distance from Tehuantepec is the sea-port of Salina Cruz. So curious is the position of this tropical bay, running as it does exactly east and west, that the sun rises in the sea and sets in the sea each day during the greater part of the year. It is here that the most important harbour works are in progress. An English inland dock, fifty acres in extent, is being built, planned in such a way that its size

can be doubled should necessity arise. Even at low tide there will be thirty-three feet of water, thereby providing for the increased draught of vessels that may be expected in the future. Salina Cruz harbour will easily accommodate a million tons of shipping annually, and is shielded by the hills from the prevailing storms known as "northers." A protecting breakwater is being built of stone, covered with blocks of concrete weighing forty tons. This breakwater will be nearly three-quarters of a mile in length, and is being formed by a monster crane called a "Titan," which lifts with ease blocks of fifty tons weight and deposits them in the sea. The dock, like the quays at Coatzacoalcos, is being fitted with the most up-to-date machinery for the discharge of vessels, so that in minimum number of hours cargo may be dispatched to the opposite coast. The present little village stands on the site of the former dock, and is being swept away to be replaced by a modern town now being built on the rising ground near the harbour.

The train passes for miles and miles through a vast acreage of primeval forest, a sort of jungle of every kind of tropical tree and shrub, intermixed with palms of various kinds.

At certain seasons of the year Mexican Indians live entirely on the wild produce of the forest. Natives find bananas, pine-apples, cocoa-nuts, and dozens of tropical fruits, such as Manila mango, anona, aguacate, sapote grande, and a variety of plums unknown in England. They can shoot with their blow-guns game enough to supply their larder, and being lazy, prefer to live by the chase rather than on the results of their work.

The Isthmus is the native home of maize, which under cultivation yields two crops annually, each averaging sixty bushels to the acre. It sometimes happens that a sower and a reaper may be seen working in the same field at the same time.

Large quantities of maize are exported from Mexico, as may be seen from the table below :—

Articles.	Quantity.		
	1897.	1898.	1899.
	Lbs.	Lbs.	Lbs.
Rice	817,920	2,392,648	762,908
Wheat ... ... ... ... ...	...	10,449,288	226,765
Wheat Flour	78,775	7,041,400	6,750
Maize	2,543,174	11,160,611	1,413,481
Barley ... ... ... ... ...	...	5,663,926	35,779,000

There are sixty different kinds of humming-birds, most of whom can be found on the Isthmus, but although beautiful of plumage, they do not really sing.

Mexican coffee is rapidly coming into notice, and selling yearly in large quantities. The coffee export in 1898 was 380,714 cwt., and in 1899, 357,113 cwt. Everyone drinks coffee, therefore the probable production is something like 10,000,000 cwt. per annum. Mexican coffee is about the finest in the world. Report says the Emperor of Germany drinks nothing else. It grows to perfection on the Isthmus, where it is also found wild.

The cacao bean is likewise indigenous, and from that, of course, chocolate is made. Even in the old Aztec days chocolate was a favourite beverage. The Isthmus is claimed as the natural home of rubber, and large areas are now under cultivation. Mexican rubber is worth about eighty cents (gold) per lb., and a good tree yields from two to four pounds annually when from eight to twelve years old. It is computed that a rubber forest of 1,000 acres, containing 250 trees to the acre, ought to yield 250,000 dollars profit, or a dollar a tree annually. Large tracts of country are already under cultivation ; but the greater portion remains to be cleared. Although there is still a wild primitive charm about the place, there are something like a hundred

thousand inhabitants scattered along the sea-ports, rivers, and railroads. In fact, from three to four thousand people are at present employed merely on the new route.

As far as agricultural production goes, Tehuantepec is a veritable Paradise, and were it not for the dangers to health which always accompany life in a tropical climate, it would be a veritable Garden of Eden ; and as before mentioned, Mr. Le Plonchon declares the true Garden of Eden was in Yucatan, close by. The climate is equable ; there are winter and summer months, the rains falling during the latter season, but spring and autumn are unknown. My visit was in the beginning of the hot weather ; the thermometer was about 100 F. degrees in the shade ; but the heat did not seem overpowering, the mornings and evenings were so lovely. One of the greatest products is sugar. Like coffee, it grows wild, but when under cultivation the cane frequently has twenty-eight joints, and reaches a diameter of two or three inches. Rice often yields two crops without any re-sowing or attention. Cotton does well in parts, and pine-apples flourish. I was told the latter sometimes weigh as much as 15 lbs. each. We saw acres and acres of them growing wild along the side of the track.

On our return trip, before we rejoined our large steamer, I had rather an interesting experience. In consequence of the lowness of the water—for the anticipated summer rains had not yet arrived—we did not accomplish the journey back to San Nicolas in one day, and as we were unable to travel at night, and our whole party of sixteen could not possibly sleep on that small deck, we managed to anchor near an hacienda. This grand farm had five beds to offer, and accordingly five of us went off to sleep on shore. It was a real Southern Mexican farm, and therefore merits description.

We had dined on board, to the accompaniment of a village band on the bank, and enjoyed our meal before an audience composed of the inhabitants of the entire village.

About nine p.m., escorted by ship's lanterns, we scrambled up the bank to our shore house. A railing surrounded the garden, on which were roosting dozens of black birds with white tips to their wings ; these were zopilotes or buzzards. They are the scavengers of Mexico, and are protected by law. It is believed they have no sense of smell, and as they cannot see prey at night, they merely sit and wait till dawn. What a size they are ! Almost as big as turkeys ; and how they pounce down on a dead animal and tear it to shreds ! Horrible stories are told. It is said that if a man be dying, these buzzards will hover round the house for hours. Instinct tells them death is at hand ; so that when they flock near a dwelling where there is illness the natives do not try to do any more for their sick friend, and will even go so far as to prepare for his funeral before life departs if the buzzards persistently remain.

The "death signals" did not move as we approached, they barely lifted their heads. We crossed the garden, in which, strange to say, many beautiful flowers were growing —the châtelaine of the house prided herself on her garden ; the beds had been enclosed with brick or stone for purposes of irrigation, and she watered and tended the plants herself. The result was highly satisfactory, and before I left the following morning she kindly presented me with some lovely roses. As a rule no care is taken of gardens in Mexico, for so many orchids, palms and flowers grow wild outside, people do not care to water plants inside their fence ; therefore artificial flowers are more often found in houses than real ones, simply because the real die so quickly in those sultry lands, and the others give less trouble.

A wide balcony ran right round that big rambling house, and on to it opened large green-shuttered doors from the rooms. They had no windows, not a single pane of glass was there in that large building ; one door opened on to the court-yard or patio, the other on to the balcony, and all through the

day both doors stood wide, while light and air were admitted through these apertures, but at night everything was closed.

At the front entrance, drawn up in two lines along the balcony, were rows of chairs. On one side sat the lady of the house and all her women-folk, hand-maidens and children; on the other side was the Ranchero with his followers. All rose to greet us as we entered, but everyone, including the lady, continued to smoke a long cigar. A couple of trestle beds had been put up for some of our party in the brick-floored hall; in the room beyond two neat little cots had been prepared, with clean white mosquito curtains, and I was allotted an adjacent room to myself. It had three doors, not one of which boasted a bolt.

We all bowed, we all shook hands, the proficient Spanish scholars or Mexicans of the party chatted pleasantly, and finally, with the aid of a lamp, I retired to bed. The room was large, and my bed was enveloped in a mosquito net although there were no mosquitos. Mattress there was none, but a plaited grass mat was swung on the wooden trestles from side to side, somewhat resembling a stretched-out hammock. These grass mats are common in hot lands; they are cool, pliable and clean, and although a little hard for unaccustomed elbows, they are really quite nice and sensible. Sheets there were none, only a couple of red blankets in case the night grew chilly and a pillow in a fine linen case. At the other end of the room was a large old-fashioned four-post bed; but it had no bottom, and its frame was used to support sacks of potatoes, one of which having burst, its contents were lying on the brick floor. The owners of the house were well-to-do people, yet the enamelled tin basin stood on an old box, and even at the bedside there was no carpet. I opened a door leading on to the patio before going to bed, for the potatoes made their presence known by their odour, but I did not like to open that on the verandah in case a wild-cat, lion, jaguar, or

leopard should take a fancy to walk into my room, for these beasts still wander at large. I looked carefully for a scorpion, for it seemed just the place to find one, but as nothing more venomous than a spider the size of a dollar-piece appeared, I dived behind my curtains and slept.

Before daylight we were up. Three whistles from our steamer was the signal to get ready, and when I emerged from my spacious chamber I found the entire household had resumed their seats in rows upon the balcony to formally bid us good-bye. The lady was smoking again, and some were engaged in busily rolling the green tobacco on their knees into cigars. But—and this was really amazing—a little boy not quite three years old was busily puffing away at a large cigar! Yes, such small children are allowed to smoke! This infantile person, two years and ten months old, seemed to thoroughly enjoy his weed, which was at least eight inches long.

It was extraordinary to see a full-sized cigar in his baby mouth, yet he puffed at it most professionally, while in his left hand he held a banana from which he took bites between the puffs, occasionally stopping to play with a small mongrel puppy!

“Does he often smoke?” I asked the mother, in amazement.

“Si, Señora, he smokes three or four cigars a day; all our children have done so at that age.”

“Does he ever let it out?” I asked.

“No, never,” replied his fond mamma, “he would consider that a disgrace. He lights it himself, and smokes it through.”

Adaptability of temperament to climate!

The child looked perfectly well and chubby, as he ate bananas in the intervals of smoking; it apparently did not interfere with his appetite. It was a tobacco hacienda, and much of the produce went by river to Alvarado, and

thence to England by sea, where it is probably sold as the best Havanah!

The estimated production of tobacco in Mexico was :—In 1898, £17,054,828.

The revolution in the island of Cuba has served as an impulse to the tobacco industry on the Isthmus, and the growers have extended their plantations, especially in the southern part of the Republic, with the result that the exports in 1898 were nearly double those of 1897, and were destined for the markets of Germany, France, Belgium and New York.

On the Isthmus as everywhere else in Mexico, the better class people are of Spanish origin, and Spanish is their language. The natives are of Indian descent, mostly of the Zapotec tribe, the same people who are supposed to have built the magnificent ancient temples of Mitla, which lie only one hundred miles north of Tehuantepec. How glad I was I had not attempted to ride that hundred miles, for my illness would have overtaken me on the way, and “a hundred miles from everywhere” would have proved more disastrous even than those bites actually did—and they were bad enough, in all conscience! What a pity tropical lands have such drawbacks!

The Indians are a fine people as a rule, lazy and indolent like all Southern peoples, and yet on occasions they will travel fifty miles per diem on foot through the mountains, and keep that pace up for days together. They can carry great weights on their heads—a hundred to a hundred and fifty pounds being quite a usual load. In some parts of the Isthmus they have a curious fashion of tying weights to the horses’ tails, which the animals drag without any apparent trouble along the mountain tracks.

Labour, as we have seen, is a great difficulty in Mexico. The Indian in the south seems to have even less ambition than his brother in the north ; he lives on little or nothing,

he does not want to save, so he only works when he actually wants money, and never on a *fiesta* or saint's day, of which there seems an endless number in the country.

The Indian peon's soul has never expanded ; dwarfed at birth, he is narrowed by habit until his mind has become so vacant that he does not own one thought to rub against another. Hugging superstition, and the art of idleness, which he understands full well, are his only joys. He must have intuitive knowledge of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Apology for Idlers." Stevenson gave a smiling boy a coin for his cheerfulness and happy expression ! He would not have required to disburse many such coins among the Mexican Indians, but they know how to love passionately.

It is a daily occurrence for a man or woman to go to a drug store and ask for a "love potion," just as was done in the days of Juliet ; they drink the draught, and pay their centavos, happy in the belief that their sweetheart will return their affection.

There is another beautiful many-coloured bird in Mexico called Chupa-mirto, the first word meaning suction, the second a flower. One day on a country road we saw a man fondling a little dead bird, but when he found we were watching him, he opened his cotton shirt and placed it inside, next his heart.

"Ah, that is a common superstition," said a friend. "The Indians think so long as they carry a Chupa-mirto next their skin, the man or woman they love cannot play them false. If they are enamoured with someone who does not care for them, they think they will win the love by keeping the bird next their heart."

It is a pretty bird, and a pretty superstition.

All Indians are afraid of the evil eye ; but they do not paint a hand upon their houses, as do the people in Morocco, to protect them against misfortunes.

They also fear the cry of the owl. A popular saying is that "the owl is the Indian's enemy," and when he cries a Mexican dies.

The deer is no longer respected, he is killed for his skin ; but in the time of the Spanish invasion the deer was as sacred an animal in Mexico as the bull is in India to-day, and no one ever shot one of the pretty creatures. That superstition has died out.

Of course there are witches, as already noticed ; but one very common practice is to get them to make a love effigy. For example, if a girl is in love, and the object of her affection jilts her and marries another girl, the first love goes off to the nearest witch. Together they make an effigy in rags—not clay or wax, but rags when it is a love case—and having painted his face and dressed him up as near to life as they can (although the one I saw resembled nothing in heaven or earth), they put pins into his vital parts, his heart, his lungs, his stomach or his head, singing a weird incantation the while. If the Fates are kind the unfaithful lover soon afterwards sickens at one of these points, pines away and dies.

Such then are the people. The possibilities of the Isthmus itself may be gathered from this sketchy account of the land and its yield. It must be remembered that there have been greater battles than Waterloo, yet none have perhaps so affected human destiny. There are greater railroads than Tehuantepec, but none are likely so completely to change the course of the world's commerce than this short route.

Up till now it remains practically virgin country, so little has been done for its development ; but with the opening-up of this great Isthmus route matters must rapidly change. Capital will flow into the country, enterprise will arise, and in a few years all will be different. With the march of civilisation, hospitals and ice-making machines are already

being put up in the towns, so really the Isthmus is becoming quite up-to-date!

The Tehuantepec route will be shorter and cheaper than those already in existence. In addition to its through traffic, its local freight will be considerable, for it practically opens up a new tropical country, able to produce abundantly and distribute economically, for which reasons it promises, humanly speaking, to prove a great success.

We were a very jolly party on that Tehuantepec trip. I had learned that champagne was more easily procured than milk, and foie gras than bread! It was a journey full of interest, a journey into an almost unknown land as far as civilised visitors go, and yet we had a chef and a butler; but, alas! like all the good things of life it drew only too quickly to a close.

We had seen the Isthmus, and after bidding a farewell to Coatzacoalcos turned north again. What a journey lay before me! Something like nine days and nights on the cars intervened between me and New York! From whence that marvellous ship the *Oceanic* was destined to bear me home to England.

Vera Cruz was en fête when we arrived. March, 1901, was the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of that seaport.

Military and civic parades were held, sports, serenades, balls, fireworks and banquets. Perhaps the prettiest of all was the children's ball, or for fine spectacular effect the Venetian festival in the Harbour, when every ship was lighted. Vera Cruz was truly en fête. We were smothered with confetti; poles, flags, streamers and decorations ornamented every dwelling, and the three hundredth anniversary will long be remembered by the inhabitants of that famous seaport.

It was very hot—punkahs and electric fans did not keep the houses cool—but then the summer had set in.

Unfortunately I was obliged to leave Mexico without personally saying good-bye to my kind friends, General and Madame Diaz. The President had been ill, and subsequently paid a lengthy visit to Colonel Alarcón, the Governor of Morelos, from which he had not returned when I left the country.

Their kindness and courtesy, the extraordinary thoughtfulness and consideration with which I was treated will ever remain in my mind. Without the personal aid of General Diaz I could not have written "Mexico as I saw it," and perhaps this peep into the life of the people, over whom he rules so powerfully, may help to make that wonderful country a little better understood.

Congress opened on 16th September, 1901, and in his speech the President stated the Revenue of Mexico exceeded by 11,000,000 dollars the receipts announced six months before!

Statistics are doubtless interesting for those who like figures ; but rows of statistics would give but a poor idea of a country which a personal account of the life of the people brings more easily before the stranger.

Mexico is a great country, and Mexico has a grand future. In agriculture and mining lie her strength, and she is forging ahead in both, ably steered over billows and shoals by that great man at her helm ; but she must not try to grow young too quickly !

APPENDIX A.

MINING AND TRADE.

IN writing a book of travel, one has to cater for many tastes, therefore a volume on Mexico would be incomplete without mention of its mining and trade prospects, consequently this chapter is inserted for the benefit of people interested in such subjects, although it has nothing to do with my personal experiences. For the notes I am greatly indebted to Mr. William Guggenheim and Mr. Herbert Bourchier.

Silver has been worked continuously since the days of Cortés, and even the old Aztecs made ornaments of gold and worked in precious metals.

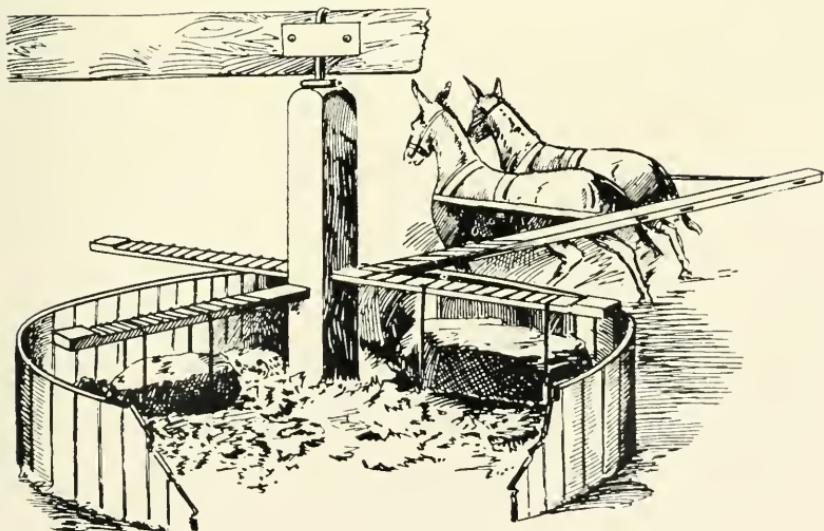
Some hundred and fifty million ounces of silver are yearly produced in the world, of which nearly fifty-five million come from Mexico, and about the same amount from the United States, showing that the remaining forty million ounces represent the yield of all the rest of the earth put together.

So many tales have been told of the fabulous mineral wealth of Mexico, one readily forms an impression that as a mineral-producing country Mexico stands foremost among the nations of the world. This, however, is not so when one compares Mexico's mineral production with that of the United States. Considering the limited population, and the improvident and indolent nature of its people, the production of mineral is certainly large, and with capital, energy, and intelligence this production is capable of material increase. It is upon its silver production that Mexico's reputation as a great mining country is founded. In the States of Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Guanajuato, and Hidalgo, as well as on the west coast, silver mines of marvellous richness have been worked for years, many of which are still producing that metal.

Although no statistics exist, the average cost to-day of producing silver is no doubt cheaper in Mexico than in the United States, so that a material



Bringing the ore from the mine.



An arrastra.

lowering of the price of silver would result in the quicker closing down of mines in the United States than in Mexico. The principal mining States of Mexico, in addition to those already mentioned, are Durango, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas, and they are still affording ample opportunity for exploitation and investment. All these States have reasonably good railroad facilities, and most of their mines are accessible to the large American smelting establishments in Mexico.

Branch roads, however, connecting the main lines of railroads are still in many places essential, but when these are once made the increase in the mineral production of the country will be enormous. The States of Oaxaca, Guerrero, Michoacan, and indeed several others, have not yet been thoroughly exploited because of this want of railroad facilities, but there is no doubt their mineral resources are large.

The mining laws of Mexico are excellent, and few difficulties are encountered. The law, "follow down your side lines," here prevails, and the troublesome apex law which has involved so many mines in the United States in litigation is not known. The old law of Mexico, compelling the owner of a mine to do a stipulated amount of work yearly, and employ so many men on the claims, has recently been changed. The present law is simply how much surface the mines cover, and the stamp tax is paid accordingly. Therefore the greater the surface, naturally the prettier the owner's mine titles look covered with variegated and beautifully coloured but expensive stamps! The mining officials as a rule are courteous and painstaking, and extended litigation is hardly known.

Various methods for the treatment of ores are employed; large lead and copper smelters and lixiviation plants are scattered throughout the country, but there is one process that is peculiarly and characteristically Mexican. This is known as the *Patio* process.

As can be understood by the simplest mind, a mine will produce by far more low-grade ore than high-grade, and, in fact, few mines pay their expenses if this low-grade ore cannot be successfully treated in some way or other. At this point one must consider that when the mines of Mexico were first worked there were no railways or means of transporting heavy machinery, therefore some method had to be devised for treating ores in the interior, the commercial value of which would not stand the heavy rate of freight transportation on mule back from the mines to Vera Cruz, and from thence by steamer or sailing vessel to the large smelters in England or Germany. In the year 1557, A.D., a native of Pachuca, by name Bartolomé de Medina, invented the *Patio* process, of which I will give a short description as it is still in daily use.

On the ore being brought up to the mouth of the shaft in cow-hide bags (by means of a hoister in the shape of a huge barrel, which is pulled round

on an elongated axis by horses or mules, and around which the hoisting cable is wound), it is spread out in the yard of the mine, and small boys then sort it into various grades ; this sorting is called the "Pepena." It is done merely by sight, as the youngsters can tell immediately if the ore be rich or poor by putting it in water and looking at the character of the stones. After sorting, the *rich* ore is packed for export, or for sale to the ore-buyers or smelters. The low-grade ore is then sent down to one of the so called Haciendas de Beneficio. Here the ore, after being broken by means of primitive wooden "stamps," is then reduced to a fine mud by means of the *arrastra*.

An arrastra is a sort of basin built into the floor and lined with cement or stone. The usual diameter of an arrastra is about nine to twelve feet. In the middle is a revolving upright shaft of wood, through which pass two cross-bars, thus giving four arms, one of which extends over the edge of the basin, and to which the mules are attached. To each of the cross-bars are hung by chains four large heavy stones having one flat side at least. (To explain this better, a rough sketch is added, showing two of the stones). As the mules drag these stones round on the ore, the latter gets ground down, and water is added, so that in time the original ore is reduced to a state of liquid mud. This is then spread out in layers of about one foot thick on the floor of the Patio this yard having a floor of carefully-adjusted large flat stones, or even in some cases of dove-tailed boards. Great care is necessary in the construction of this flooring, otherwise the quicksilver would work its way through and cause great loss of both quicksilver and silver.

After the mud-pie (or Torta) is laid out, it is left for a day or two, to allow the water to evaporate, and thus attain a greater state of density. After this salt is added, and the wretched mules are turned in to tramp round for a day or two more ; then sulphate of copper or magistral are added, and often lime, according to the nature of the ore. After this quicksilver is put in, which catches up the silver. The poor animals have their hoofs and tails all eaten away by the quicksilver, and only last a few weeks ; it is a horrible business. The Torta is thus worked from thirty to seventy days, according to the time of year. When ready for washing off, *i.e.*, when the silver has been caught up by the quicksilver, it is reduced to a liquid state, and put into a "washing-tank." Owing to the high specific gravity of quicksilver, the latter immediately goes to the bottom and finally by continual washing nothing but amalgam is left, *i.e.*, quick-silver and silver.

This amalgam is then retorted and the silver made into bars. Thus within about three months after the low-grade ore comes to the surface it is turned into hard silver, without the aid of machinery. The silver is

finally sent to the nearest town having a mint, and sold, when it is converted into Mexican dollars.

Latterly the wooden stamps and arrastras have begun to disappear, owing to the railways bringing modern mechanical stamp mills, and Chilian mills, run by steam or electricity. Waterfalls long idle have also been turned to use by the Pelton wheel and other inventions, and electricity in many Mexican mining camps is now found.

Not content with these changes, new blood has been endeavouring to improve Bartolomé de Medina's system of treading the tortas with mules, but as yet without effect. Recently one of the companies tried to substitute for mules a long revolving pole on a pivot in the centre of a round arrastra. This pole was furnished with a quantity of wooden imitation horses' legs, and the feet were even shod with iron shoes to try and obtain the proper friction. These legs were sent galloping through the mud-pie, but without effecting any good result.

"Last week," says a friend, writing on March 30th, 1901, "yet another substitute for mules was tried, which consists of a set of stamps that trot round and round the torta on a spiral screw, going to the centre and back as well as completing the circle. The small tests proved satisfactory, but up to now nothing has been found so satisfactory as the living animal."

The advantages of mechanically working these tortas would be—

- (1) Saving cost of mules and their keep.
- (2) By operating day and night the torta can be worked in half the time.

- (3) Economy in men to look after mules and tortas.

A mule or horse for the patio process which works daily from seven a.m. till three p.m., costs from nine to fifteen dollars net, and only lasts three months.

Miners as a rule are extremely superstitious ; for instance, they hate the sight of a woman in the mines, and are convinced that if one goes down a mine and the vein is subsequently lost, or should any mishap occur, the devil in woman's form was to blame. For this reason there are comparatively few managers who will allow ladies to enter their mines for fear that their men should shun them, in anticipation of a cave-in or other misfortune. In fact, few men would accept the responsibility of taking ladies down a mine, and yet, curiously enough, there are some places where a visit from one of the fair sex is appreciated.

The silver output, according to the Blue Book, is :—

	Value.			
	1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.
Silver ores	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.
,, bullion...	11,558,529	11,401,176	11,048,358	10,766,099
,, coin (Mexican)	28,505,845	37,601,752	39,104,930	41,270,718
,, „ (foreign)	18,253,978	21,274,119	15,886,765	4,761,105
	483,343	651,228	702,024	816,709
Total	58,861,695	70,928,275	66,742,077	57,614,631

The comparison of these figures shows that the greatest decrease has been in the quantity of silver dollars exported, the amount in the year 1899 being the smallest in the above-mentioned years, and, in fact, in the whole of the ten previous years, owing to the low price obtained for silver dollars in the New York market during the past year.

The following table gives the number of all the titles referring to silver mines, alone or in conjunction with other metals, that were reported to be in force on December 31, 1899, and paying taxes. The figures can no doubt be considered as correct, as they are published by the Department of Finance, and are compiled from data furnished that department by the agents entrusted to collect the tax on mining properties. The figures for the previous year are also given for the sake of comparison. They refer only to those mines that are in existence, no mention being made of those whose titles have lapsed during the year.

The principal mining centres where silver is found in an unmixed condition are the State of Durango, Zacatecas, Sonora, Chihuahua, Hidalgo, and in Guanajuato. Chihuahua is the State where most silver is found in conjunction with copper or lead, and Zacatecas where it is found in conjunction with both these minerals.

Number of the Titles to Silver Mining Properties in force on December 31, 1898-99 :—

	1898.	1899.
Silver		
,, and copper	4,045	4,054
,, „ lead	165	225
,, „ iron	1,069	1,346
,, „ manganese	44	...
,, „ copper, and lead	3	4
,, „ and mercury ... ... ...	...	27
Total	5,326	5,658

Mexico's lead production is, considering everything, considerable, amounting to about 90,000 tons yearly. The United States produce 175,000 tons. Lead, which is found mostly in carbonaceous deposits, is never treated in Mexico for its lead contents alone, but is always worked in connection with silver ores, as is also largely the case in the United States.

The gold production amounts to about 9,000,000 dollars in value, or 450,000 ounces. The world's production equals about 240,000,000 dollars in value, the United States contributing about 70,000,000 dollars. From this it will be seen that Mexico as yet is hardly to be considered a gold producer.

The copper production is also insignificant, amounting to about 22,000 tons, whilst that of the United States is about 268,000 tons; the entire production of the world amounts to 486,000 tons. The Mexican copper production, however, is on the increase, and there is no doubt large deposits exist, which, if the present price of copper continues to prevail, will be opened up within the next few years.

"On December 31, 1899, the number of titles to copper properties in force and paying taxes to the Government was set down at 258, as against 190 on the same date in the year 1898, the greatest number, 48, being situated in the State of Michoacan, which are mostly controlled by the company working the Inguaran mines in that same State. There are 36 copper properties in the State of Aguascalientes, 32 in the State of Sonora, and 25 in the State of Durango, while Lower California, where the famous mines of the Boleo Company are situated, is reported to contain but 15. The area covered by the properties in the State of Durango is 1,910 acres, while that covered by the 48 in the State of Michoacan is only 1,822 acres. This mineral is also found in conjunction with iron and lead, principally in the State of Zacatecas.

The exports of copper in the past three years have been as follows:—

						Tons.	£
1897	...	...	...	...	...	17,667	337,796
1898	...	...	...	...	...	23,169	573,824
1899	...	...	...	...	...	25,103	792,516

The exports of copper include both copper ore and refined, principally in the shape of copper matte, which is sent to the United States. The exports of ore show a very large decrease from previous years, the quantity given in the official returns being 209 tons in 1899, as against 12,938 tons in 1898, while the exports of refined copper or copper matte were 24,893 tons in 1899, as against 10,199 in 1898."

The average price of copper in the New York market during the year 1899 was 16·67 c. gold per lb.

There are very large deposits of iron ore in Mexico, the best known being in the State of Durango, near Durango City. There is also a very large deposit near Lampazos, in the State of Nuevo Leon, and large iron-works are being constructed in the City of Monterey, State of Nuevo Leon, for the treatment of the same. The successful working, however, of these deposits, in competition with the cheap production of iron ore and manufacture of pig iron in the United States, has still to be determined. In the United States they have the advantage of operating on a gigantic scale, and with cheap fuel. Mexico, however, proposes to off-set this competition by high tariff laws. Notwithstanding these large deposits of iron ore, the production is, up to date, almost nil, outside of that used for so-called fluxing purposes in lead smelting.

The iron deposit near Durango City is called the "Iron Mountain," of which Humboldt wrote when he made his enterprising visit so many years ago to Mexico. Between 50 and 60 per cent. of the entire mountain is iron ore. It belongs to several proprietors, and strange white monuments—like enormous milestones—mark the individual boundaries. The owners have not begun to blast the rock yet; they are merely working away at the sand and fallen pieces all round the base. Men shovel this on to hand-cars—wheelbarrows are practically unknown in Mexico, where everything is carried either by hand or on the head—take it to the lead-smelting works near at hand, or put it directly into the railway cars to send away to other lead-smelters, where it is used for so-called fluxing purposes.

One very curious thing is worth mentioning. On the mountain-side are numerous ant-heaps—not heaps, but ant-quarries. On looking closely into any of these, which are usually about two feet in diameter, one finds it is composed of small iron pellets, exactly the same size; one heap will consist of big pellets, another of smaller ones, and so on. How or why do the ants bring them in this way to the surface? The native Mexican is often possessed of an ancient blunderbuss, here is his iron shot ready made; he loads his gun right up. Towards evening he goes down to the river with an old cow, and hiding himself behind his friend, he waits his opportunity to shoot at the wonderful flights of wild duck as they pass. He kills many at a time, and unfortunately wounds many more. But teal are excellent eating, and we thank him for his enterprise.

The only large coal-producing area is that controlled by the Mexican International Railroad in the northern part of the country, in the State of Coahuila. Other persons have recently secured coal tracks in the same district, and when these are once operated, the coal production of Mexico will be considerably increased. Coal, however, is a serious question

in Mexico, as its own production is still insignificant, not being nearly sufficient for its own consumption. Cheap transportation facilities, however, have materially aided the country in this respect, although fuel is still expensive, making manufacture costly.

There is some onyx and also good marble, but neither is produced in large quantities. Oil has not been worked yet in Mexico, although several wells have been found.

For a country, therefore, whose main industry is mining, any comparison at present with the United States is far from favourable, but the comparison is hardly fair, as the United States far surpasses any other country in its combined mineral production. There is abundant opportunity in Mexico for mining, and with expert engineers the country can be readily exploited and examined. High values, however, are already put on valuable properties, most of which are still held by Mexicans. During the last ten years many foreigners, particularly Americans, have become large mining property owners. Many new mines are being opened up everywhere; but bogus companies are doing much harm. It is quite pitiable to find the number of companies which have been floated in England without the very slightest chance of financial success, suffice to say that such things have been and are being done. In one notable instance people took up the shares, yet no returns were forthcoming; more money was demanded for increased machinery, and better prospects were reported. Part of the money was actually expended in plant which had been sent out—as a blind no doubt, and salaries paid, but only to the promoters under assumed names, and not for labour at the mines. There is ore, certainly, but such poor stuff it could never pay to work, a fact the promoters must have known full well. How is it that investors do not send out skilled, competent, and honest experts to investigate before they pay their money?

We heard many stories of the kind in Mexico, and would earnestly entreat people before investing in Mexican mines—of which there are several splendid ones—to be sure what they are about before parting with any money. Up to the last ten years the methods pursued in mining were of a very simple and crude nature, but during that time more advanced modes of operating, on a large scale with machinery, have been introduced, so that to-day the mining methods employed in Mexico compare favourably with those in any part of the world.

Turning from mining, it may be mentioned that the export and import trade of Mexico are steadily increasing. The bulk of both is naturally with the United States. England is gradually losing ground in her exports, Germany as gradually gaining it. Will any manufacturer whose eyes chance to fall upon these pages lay these facts to heart? *We are losing ground, Germany and the United States are gaining it.* Why? Because

we are allowing these two enterprising countries to pass us in the race for commerce, and are folding our hands and working on exactly the same lines to-day as we did fifty years ago when we were first in the field. Other countries have gone ahead, and the sooner we shoot past them and revolutionise our methods and our industries, the better, unless we wish to drop altogether out of the reckoning. The United States are "knocking at the door"—as Ibsen would say—but let us push past and open it. English trade unions are stifling our trade, as trusts seem likely eventually to ruin the manufacturers of America.

Want of fuel is one of the most pressing needs of Mexico. Forests are being burnt up, and cabinet woods destroyed. Husks of cotton seed, wheat, straw, and cotton-bushes are being utilised for fuel. There are beds of peat, as yet hardly worked; indeed, peat is found within ten miles of the City.

According to Blue Book reports:—

The imports of coal and coke in the year 1899 amounted to 886,637 tons, as against 597,842 tons in 1898. The increase is accounted for in part by the many new industrial enterprises in the Republic, and also by the extension of the railway lines, which are being steadily increased in length. The largest portion of both coal and coke comes from the United States, the United Kingdom and her Colonies, and Germany following next. The coal brought from Australia is landed at the ports on the Pacific coast, principally Acapulco which is the coaling station for vessels of the Pacific squadron. Some is also taken to Manzanillo where it is employed on the railway from that port to the City of Colima, and much is also used by the contractors for the water supply and sewerage of Manzanillo. This port of Manzanillo is undoubtedly destined to be one of the most important on the Pacific coast, especially when it is in direct communication with the town of Guadalajara by rail now under construction.

The export of coal from Mexico in 1899 amounted to 110,510 tons, as against 116,679 tons in 1898. The price of the ton of Mexican coal on the border, as put down in the official return of exports, was four dollars ten cents silver per ton, while the price of foreign coal in the City of Mexico ranges from twenty to twenty-two dollars per ton.

Roughly speaking, America supplies sixty-one and a half per cent. of Mexico's wants; the United Kingdom twenty per cent.; Germany seventeen per cent. The remaining per-cent-age is divided into very small proportions among the other countries. The imports of iron rails in 1899 amounted to £394,824, as against £336,578 in 1898. This increase is accounted for by the development of the railway systems. Barbed wire imported in 1899 amounted to £52,815, as against £48,218 in 1898.

Every branch of iron and steel trade is increasing; ploughs, corrugated iron sheets, wire, bar steel, iron piping, hoop iron, agricultural implements, etc., nearly all of which comes from the United States. What are Birmingham and Sheffield about when this ever-increasing trade is waiting for their produce?

“Steam engines, both locomotive and stationary, show an increase of £150,000 in the value imported; and if taken in conjunction with the former item, indicate more fully the steady progress of the country in the development of industries. The total imports of machinery and steam engines in the years 1897-98-99 were as follows:—

Articles.	1897.	1898.	1899.
Steam engines	£ 186,748	£ 325,143	£ 576,535
Machinery	583,347	745,681	893,184
Total	770,095	1,070,824	1,469,719

While on the subject of machinery, it may be mentioned that, apart from the increase of fifteen cotton mills, several large factories for tanning leather and making boots and shoes, breweries, distillery plants brick and clay factories, have been established and there are others in course of construction.

The value of the chemical products imported into Mexico in the year 1899 was £455,300, as against £376,615 in 1898. The imports from the United States have increased very considerably during the past year. The boot and shoe industry is almost entirely in the hands of American manufacturers, though the principal dealers in boots and shoes in the City of Mexico are Spaniards.

The American manufacturers, always on the look-out for new fields for the investment of capital, have made a purchase of a piece of land in the City of Guadalajara, and are erecting a large tannery with a boot and shoe factory attached. The imports of petroleum oil, both crude and refined, show an increase from £75,160 in 1898 to £109,617 in 1899, the greater quantity being imported in a crude state, and refined in the large refineries established at Tampico, Vera Cruz, and the City of Mexico, whence it is distributed all over the country.

Openings for British trade being the chief purpose of these reports, it is only fair to the manufacturer and merchant to bring before his notice the articles which form the principal part of the import trade of each country, and it is, therefore, hoped that the foregoing figures, referring to the trade

of Mexico for the year 1899, may be of service ; and though they show a slight increase in favour of British trade, there is ample room for it to increase very considerably. The figure of £2,072,127 set down as the value of the imports from the United Kingdom represents eighteen and a half per cent. of the whole of the trade of Mexico in the year 1899, and includes the imports from her colonies as well, which, according to the official returns, were : India, £49,235 ; Australia, £8,698 ; Canada, £3,865.

The trade of Mexico, as compared with that of other countries, may be small, but it is a country that is being opened up rapidly. The imports into Mexico in 1889 were £8,608,147, while in 1899 they had increased to £11,254,315, an increase in the ten years of £2,646,168, or over thirty per cent. This of itself shows the actual development of the country, as the value of the imports being based on the gold values from each country, or the equivalent of five dollars to the £1, is not liable to the fluctuations of exchange, as is the case with the exports. This method of calculating the value of foreign merchandise has been in use for many years, so that it is easy to obtain the value of the imports from any particular country by reducing the value as given in the Mexican customs returns at par.

British trade in Mexico is almost entirely in the hands of agents, many of whom are not even acquainted with the country and its customs, and speak very little Spanish, while others, though knowing the manners and customs, are unable to correspond in English, therefore it is not surprising that our trade does not receive the impetus it should. The commercial travellers who come to Mexico from the United Kingdom are, with very few exceptions, Germans, or at least of German extraction, who, having a knowledge of several languages, are better able to undertake the employment than are those of British extraction who rely on their abilities to make themselves understood.

The point that a British merchant should always bear in mind in his business relations with Mexico is strict and careful adherence to the requirements of the Mexican customs tariff, of which an English translation can be procured."

Catalogues are much wanted, they facilitate sale when illustrated.

The greater part of the agricultural machinery and implements at present, as has been already said, is imported from the United States, but British manufacturers could well afford to give their attention to the wants and requirements of this market. A case may be cited in support of this. English threshing machines are recognised throughout the country as being superior to those made in the United States. Their finish and adjustment is better, and the results obtained are greater, but owing to

the inability to procure pieces for repairing them in cases of accident, the order is often given to an American firm.

The cylinders in American machines are made in pieces, and the teeth are attached by means of screws and nuts; in case of one or more breaking, they can be taken out and new ones put in, while in machines of British manufacture the cylinder and teeth are made in one piece, which, if broken by accident, has to be taken out, rendering the machine useless until a new piece can be obtained, either by having it cast in one of the foundries in the country, which is expensive, on account of the mould having to be made first, or by waiting for it to come from the makers, this often entailing a delay of several months.

The demand for mining machinery and tools is always increasing, and though there are several American firms established in Mexico city, English tools and machinery would find a market.

Return of Principal Articles of Import to Mexico during the
Calendar Years 1898-99.

Articles.		1898.		1899.	
		Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Raw cotton	Cwts. ...	162,246	£ 209,252	127,398	£ 170,864
Coal and coke... ...	Tons ...	597,842	317,640	886,637	423,750
Cotton piece-goods	Sq. yards	47,330,090	651,386	49,029,863	741,556
Cottons at value ... ...	...	...	383,765	...	431,544
Linen piece-goods	Sq. yards	1,053,416	65,157	2,233,420	79,914
Linens at value ... ...	...	...	42,839	...	45,918
Woollen piece-goods... ...	Sq. yards	1,620,079	262,174	1,816,123	307,763
Woollens at value ... ...	...	...	77,191	...	89,024
Iron and steel	Tons ...	114,777	£ 1,032,832	134,480	£ 1,384,572
Machinery and implements ... ...	...	...	1,320,800	...	1,809,318
Chemical products ... ...	...	...	376,615	...	455,300
Spirituous liquors ... ...	...	...	499,149	...	548,594
Paper and manufactures of ... ...	...	...	306,234	...	407,056
Other articles ... ...	...	...	3,576,776	...	4,359,142
 Total ... ...	...	...	9,121,810	...	11,254,315

Return of Principal Articles of Export from Mexico during the
Calendar Years 1898-99.

Articles.				Quantity.	Value.	Quantity.	Value.
Gold	...	...	...	...	1,651,486	...	1,583,866
Silver	...	...	...	...	6,326,592	...	5,731,455
Fibres	...	...	...	Tons	80,586	1,709,251	85,788
Coffee	...	...	...	Cwts.	380,714	919,362	357,113
Copper	...	...	...	Tons	23,169	573,824	25,103
Live stock	...	...	...	Head	255,422	500,479	206,336
Tobacco	...	...	...	Lbs.	9,010,541	472,266	3,932,225
Hides and skins	...	...	...	Cwts.	126,986	341,563	115,369
Lead	...	...	...	"	1,203,044	311,961	1,327,508
Woods, cabinet	...	...	...		...	176,993	...
Beans	...	...	...	Cwts.	263,874	165,011	321,653
Dyewoods	...	...	...	Tons	57,571	164,072	49,849
Vanilla	...	...	...	Lbs.	59,034	65,011	133,676
Chicle	...	...	...	"	2,113,962	59,904	2,359,859
Other articles	...	...	...		...	433,738	...
Total	...	...	...	...	13,871,513	...	14,099,554

Return showing Total Value of all Articles Exported from and Imported to Mexico to and from all Foreign Countries during the Calendar Years 1898-99.

Country.	Exports.		Imports.	
	1898.	1899.	1898.	1899.
United Kingdom	1,387,151	986,969	1,608,888	2,072,103
United States	9,987,490	11,068,149	4,444,472	5,502,041
France	693,575	563,982	1,092,751	1,294,922
Germany	832,291	352,489	1,049,734	1,222,784
Spain	69,357	105,747	495,335	609,209
Other countries	901,649	1,022,218	430,630	553,256
Total	13,871,513	14,099,554	9,121,810	11,254,315

The Imports from the United States to Mexico in the last six months of 1900 were \$16,733,170 (American money)
 The Exports from Mexico to the United States in the last six months of 1900 were \$58,407,293 (Mexican)
 The Imports from England to Mexico during the last six months of 1900 were \$4,840,459 (gold)
 The Exports from Mexico to England in the last six months were \$8,751,534 (Mexican silver)

RECEIPTS OF THE MEXICAN TREASURY FROM JULY 1, 1881,
TO JUNE 30, 1899.

Years.	Receipts.	Years.	Receipts.
1881 to 1882	\$30,466,093.74	1890 to 1891	\$37,391,804.99
1882,, 1883	32,850,931.25	1891,, 1892	37,474,879.20
1883,, 1884	37,621,065.29	1892,, 1893	42,813,455.71
1884,, 1885	30,660,434.24	1893,, 1894	40,211,747.13
1885,, 1886	28,980,895.76	1894,, 1895	43,945,699.00
1886,, 1887	32,126,509.07	1895,, 1896	50,521,407.00
1887,, 1888	40,962,045.23	1896,, 1897	50,970,044.37
1888,, 1889	34,374,783.32	1897,, 1898	52,487,502.23
1889,, 1890	38,566,601.69	1898,, 1899	59,790,242.96

Figures are dry and uninteresting to the general reader; but they give an idea to the man wanting knowledge. Thus we hope the above may prove of use to someone.

APPENDIX B.

HINTS FOR TRAVELLERS.

As it spoils the sequence of a book to interlard it with too many facts, this second Appendix is added, wherein may be found a few useful hints for travellers.

(1) The best time to visit Mexico is from November to May.

(2) A few words as to expenses.

Travelling in the Republic costs about as much as in Holland, France or Germany, that is to say, about £1 a day. It is not so cheap as Switzerland or Italy, where good hotels can be found at 10s. per diem, nor is it anything like so expensive as the United States. In fact, it is really not exorbitant at all, but the hotels are bad. That is one of the most important items for Mexicans to alter. If they want their City to be the Paris of the Western World they must erect good hotels and look to their water supply and sanitation. If the country is ever to be a popular land for travellers, they must see to their hotels everywhere; there are not more than half-a-dozen good ones in the whole country. Their excellent railways and facilities for getting about are far better than the accommodation which awaits the traveller at the end of his journey.

(3) A little knowledge of Spanish is a necessity, although French and English are sufficient in educated society.

(4) A rubber bath is a constant source of joy.

(5) Everything from soap to veils, from tooth-powder to note-paper, is expensive, although practically anything can be procured in the City. Tobacco, cabs, and flowers are cheap!

(6) Both thick and thin clothing are necessary. It is hot in the tropics, and cold in the higher altitudes, especially at night. It is essential, therefore, to be provided with many changes of clothing, at the same time on specific trips one must be able to do with little. A hand bag to contain enough for one night is indispensable for cars, etc.

High light silk dresses for ladies are preferable to full evening dress, which is only required for balls or large dinner parties. Nothing that dust spoils is advisable, and light blue or lilac are colours that fly in the sun.

(7) Travelling by private car is strongly recommended when it can be afforded. (For prices see page 59.)

(8) No one suffering from a weak heart should attempt to stay long in such elevated towns as Mexico City, Zacatecas, Pachuca, Puebla, Amecameca, Patzcuaro, Texcoco, Tlaxcula, Toluca, Tula, all of which are over 7,000 feet above the sea level.

(9) For photographers and artists there are "gems" everywhere, and shops where materials can be procured are found in most of the big cities.

(10) Campbell's Guide is most useful, and Janviers, though out of date, gives much valuable historical information. The perusal of Prescott's History of Mexico adds enormously to the pleasure of the voyager, and Romero's "Geographical Notes" is a valuable addition to knowledge.

(11) The railway folders contain many useful hints. English is spoken at all stations and generally by the conductors of trains. The Custom House is nearly as severe as in the States!

(12) Without good introductions the visitor sees nothing of the life of the upper classes.

A large amount of patience and a good temper are necessary when travelling.

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